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PLAYBOY INTERVIEW:

JIM GARRISON

a candid conversation with the embattled district attorney of new orleans

On February 17, 1967, the New Orleans States-Item broke a story that would electrify the world—and hurl district attorney Jim Garrison into a bitter fight for his political life. An enterprising reporter, checking vouchers filed with the city by the district attorney's office, discovered that Garrison had spent over \$8000 investigating the assassination of President Kennedy. "Has the district attorney discovered valuable additional evidence," the States-Item asked editorially, "or is he merely saving some interesting new information that will gain for him exposure in a national magazine?" Stung, Garrison counter-attacked, confirming that an inquiry into Kennedy's assassination was under way and charging that the States-Item's "irresponsible" revelation "has now created a problem for us in finding witnesses and getting cooperation from other witnesses and in at least one case has endangered the life of a witness."

On February 18, newsmen from all over the world converged on New Orleans to hear Garrison announce at a press conference: "We have been investigating the role of the city of New Orleans in the assassination of President Kennedy, and we have made some progress—I think substantial progress. . . . What's more, there will be arrests." As reporters flashed news of Garrison's statement across the world, a 49-year-old New Orleans pilot, David Ferrie, told newsmen that the district attorney had

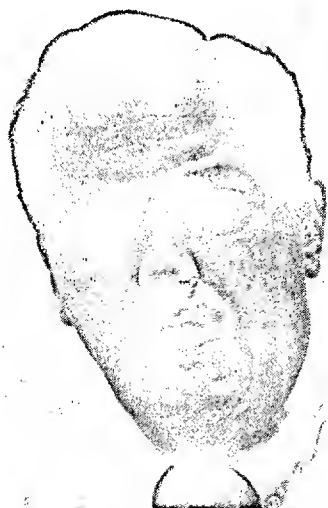
him "pegged as the getaway pilot in an elaborate plot to kill Kennedy." Ferrie, a bizarre figure who wore a flaming-red wig, false eyebrows and make-up to conceal burns he had suffered years before, denied any involvement in a conspiracy to kill the President. Garrison, he said, was out to frame him. Four days later, Ferrie was found dead in his shabby three-room apartment in New Orleans, ostensibly of natural causes—though he left behind two suicide notes.

The press had greeted Garrison's initial claims about a conspiracy with a measure of skepticism, but Ferrie's death was front-page news around the world. Garrison broke his self-imposed silence to charge that Ferrie was "a man who, in my judgment, was one of history's most important individuals." According to Garrison, "Mr. Ferrie was one of those individuals I had in mind when I said there would be arrests shortly. We had reached a decision to arrest him early next week. Apparently we waited too long." But Garrison vowed that Ferrie's death would not halt his investigation, and added, "My staff and I solved the assassination weeks ago. I wouldn't say this if we didn't have the evidence beyond a shadow of a doubt. We know the key individuals, the cities involved and how it was done."

On March 1, Garrison eclipsed even the headlines from his previous press conference by announcing the arrest of Clay

Shaw, a wealthy New Orleans businessman and real-estate developer, on charges of conspiring to assassinate John F. Kennedy. One of New Orleans' most prominent citizens, Shaw was a founder and director of the city's prestigious International Trade Mart from 1947 to 1965, when he retired to devote his time to playwriting and restoring historic homes in the old French Quarter. The day after Shaw's arrest, Garrison declared that "Shaw was none other than Clay Bertrand," the shadowy queen bee of the New Orleans homosexual underworld, who, according to attorney Dean Andrews' testimony before the Warren Commission, called him the day after the assassination and asked him to rush to Dallas to defend Oswald. Shaw heatedly denied his guilt: "I never heard of any plot and I never used any alias in my life." But New Orleans society, which had long counted Shaw one of its own, was stunned.

On March 14, a panel of three judges heard Garrison's case in a preliminary hearing to determine if there was enough evidence against Shaw to bring him to trial. Perry Raymond Russo, a 25-year-old life-insurance salesman from Baton Rouge who had once been Ferrie's "roommate," testified that in mid-September of 1963, he had attended a meeting at Ferrie's apartment where Shaw, Lee Harvey Oswald and Ferrie discussed means of assassinating the President in a



"To read the press accounts of my investigation, I'm a cross between Al Capone and Attila the Hun—bribing, threatening innocent men. Anybody who employs those methods should be disbarred."



"A number of the men who killed the President were former employees of the CIA involved in its anti-Castro underground activities in the New Orleans area. The CIA knows their identity. So do I."



"President Kennedy was killed for one reason: because he was working for a reconciliation with the U.S.S.R. and Castro's Cuba. His assassins were a group of fanatic anti-Communists and Cuban exiles."

"triangulation of these men," said a second witness, Vernon Bundy, a 29-year-old former narcotics addict, testified that in the summer of 1963, he saw Shaw pass a sum of money to Lee Harvey Oswald on the shore of Lake Pontchartrain. On March 17, after a four-day hearing, Judges Malcolm V. O'Hara, Bernard J. Bagert and Matthew S. Branniff ruled there was sufficient evidence to hold Clay Shaw for trial. Garrison's hand was further strengthened on March 22, when a 12-member grand jury of prominent New Orleans citizens, empaneled to hear Garrison's case, also ruled there were sufficient grounds to bring Shaw to court. Pending trial—which is scheduled to begin sometime this month—Shaw was allowed to go free on \$10,000 bail.

The American press remained dubious about Garrison's ability to prove his charges in court, and domestic coverage of and commentary on the district attorney's case thereafter was, at best, low-key—at worst, contemptuous. But as Newsweek reported on March 20, "In Europe, where thousands still cling to the conspiracy theory in spite of the Warren Commission's conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone . . . Garrison and his investigation have been the stuff of page-one headlines." "I'm encouraged by the support Europe is bringing me," he told a Paris-Match reporter. "Every day, I receive letters and telegrams from all the capitals. I've even had six telephone calls from Moscow." One was from Literaturnaya Gazeta, a prestigious Moscow literary magazine, which ran an interview with Garrison concluding that there was a conspiracy to kill Kennedy but that Oswald "definitely wasn't the key figure in it."

Garrison also had his supporters in the U. S. Boston's Richard Cardinal Cushing, father-confessor to the Kennedy family, said of the New Orleans probe on March 16: "I think they should follow it through. . . . I never believed that the assassination was the work of one man." And Representative Roman Pucinski, an Illinois Democrat, said: "I'm surprised more attention hasn't been paid to the ruling that Clay Shaw go on trial for participating in a plot to assassinate President Kennedy. These aren't nuts but three judges talking. It's a new ball game." Senator Russell Long of Louisiana also backed up Garrison—an old political ally—contending that he was only doing "what a district attorney should do." And perennial Warren Report critic Mark Lane (himself a PLAYBOY interviewee last February), whose best-selling "Rush to Judgment" helped persuade Garrison to launch his investigation, said after a conference with Garrison in New Orleans that the D.A.'s probe would "break the entire case wide open."

If nothing else, Garrison was certainly affecting public opinion. A Louis Harris

of the American public now believes there was a conspiracy to assassinate Kennedy, and "a major contributor to this swelling doubt is the investigation into the assassination by New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison." Even with public opinion on his side, Garrison was running into difficulties on several fronts by early summer. Three witnesses he wished to question about their complicity in the assassination had fled Louisiana, and he was unable to obtain their extradition. New Orleans—a seldom-encountered roadblock he credits to the CIA, "which knows that some of its former employees were involved in the Kennedy assassination and is doing everything possible to frustrate my investigation in order to preserve the Agency's good name." The CIA refuses to comment on Garrison's charges.

Garrison was also under heavy fire over the improper methods allegedly employed by his staff. The most blistering indictment of his probe was an NBC television special on June 19, charging that Garrison's investigators had tried to bribe three potential witnesses—Alvin Beauboeuf, Miguel Torres and Fred Lee-mans—to testify against Shaw; that Garrison's staff had attempted to induce a burglar, John Cancler, to plant false evidence in Clay Shaw's home; and that Garrison had allowed Perry Russo and Vernon Bundy to testify against Shaw even though they had previously failed lie-detector tests. NBC added that its investigators had also unearthed the real "Clay Bertrand"; and though NBC didn't name him, it said that he was not Clay Shaw. Subsequently, NBC might have had second thoughts about its exposé, for the network granted Garrison an unprecedented 30 minutes of prime Saturday-evening time to rebut its own findings. Garrison charged that the three witnesses who claimed his aids had tried to bribe them were perjurers. He also denied that his office had approached John Cancler to burglarize Shaw's home, and stated flatly that both Russo and Bundy had passed their polygraph tests. On the key point of the "real" Clay Bertrand, Garrison said that he knew the identity of the individual NBC was talking about and that he was definitely not the man who called attorney Deau Andrews to gain legal aid for Lee Harvey Oswald.

Undismayed—and undeterred—by all the charges and countercharges, Garrison still says, "We are going to win this case, and anyone who bets against us is going to lose his money." The embattled district attorney may be overconfident, but he has a history of winning every fight he starts. Born in Dennison, Iowa, on November 20, 1921, Garrison flew an unarmored spotter plane for the artillery in France and Germany during World War Two and then attended Tulane

University Law School. He then went to

work as an assistant district attorney until 1961, when he resigned with a scorching attack on Mayor Victor H. Schiro, whom he charged with corruption and failure to rigorously enforce the law.

Garrison entered the race for district attorney as a fiercely uncompromising reform candidate, lambasting the "political machine" of Mayor Schiro and characterizing the incumbent district attorney, Richard Dowling, as "the great emancipator—he let everybody go free." Garrison, six feet, six, and 240 pounds, was quickly dubbed the "Jolly Green Giant." He had no political organization and not much money, but his personal magnetism and refusal to compromise appealed to the New Orleans electorate. He defeated Dowling handily and promptly began convicting men on charges his predecessor had dropped.

Garrison's five years as district attorney have been stormy. He outraged many of his former supporters in the business community by launching a campaign against vice on Bourbon Street, charging that B-girls were mercilessly fleecing naïve tourists. Garrison cleaned up Bourbon Street himself, personally padlocking many honky-tonks and striptease clubs. But his toughest fight—until the current one—came in 1962, when he announced that the refusal of the city's eight criminal-court judges to approve funds for his investigations of organized crime "raised interesting questions about racketeer influences." The judges promptly charged Garrison with defamation of character and criminal libel—and a state court fined him \$1000. Garrison appealed the case all the way to the Supreme Court, and on November 23, 1964, in a landmark decision on the right to criticize public officials, the nation's highest tribunal reversed his conviction, contending that "speech concerning public affairs is more than self-expression; it is the essence of self-government." Never one to turn the other cheek, Garrison subsequently employed his political influence to unseat a number of the judges when they came up for re-election.

The district attorney's independence has at times nettled both left and right in New Orleans. When the police department tried to prosecute a bookdealer for selling James Baldwin's "Another Country," Garrison stepped in with a broadside against censorship and won the man's release—promptly bringing down on his head the wrath of the local White Citizens Council. At the other end of the political spectrum, he has been criticized by the liberal American Civil Liberties Union, which once accused him of trying an alleged rapist "in the press rather than in the courtroom." But Negro leaders in the city say Garrison has been a fair and impartial district attorney; in

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his last bid for reelection, he polled as well in the Negro precincts as he did in the white.

The years 1965 and 1966 were—by Garrison's standards—relatively quiet. His only major public controversy during this period flared up when he interceded with Louisiana Governor John McKeithen to win a pardon for a local stripper named Linda Birgette, who had been convicted on a charge of lewd dancing. Garrison claimed it was impossible to define obscenity in literature or the arts and argued that jailing Miss Birgette would be a "gross miscarriage of justice." McKeithen acceded to his pleas and, despite cries of protest from local bluenoses, the incident served to increase Garrison's popularity.

The same could hardly be said of his current probe, which has made him both a target for abuse—justified or otherwise—that has tended to obscure rather than clarify the issues involved in the investigation, and a victim of often one-sided press coverage that NBC's half hour of equal time has done little to rectify. In PLAYBOY's opinion, Garrison has not yet had the chance to present his side of the case—in court or out—without expurgation or editorializing. We feel he ought to have that chance. Toward this end, in mid-July, we approached the embattled district attorney with our offer of an impartial, open-ended interview. The 12-hour cross-examination that followed—in the midst of Garrison's round-the-clock investigation—was conducted in the living room of the two-story home he shares with his blonde wife and three young children in a tree-lined residential neighborhood of New Orleans. As the dog-tired district attorney stretched his long legs across a couch, battered briar pipe (a political trademark) in one hand, a vodka martini (his favorite drink) in the other, PLAYBOY interviewer Eric Norden began by asking him to answer the most damaging charges of his critics.

PLAYBOY: You have been accused—by the National Broadcasting Company, *Newsweek*, the New Orleans Metropolitan Crime Commission and your own former investigative aide William Gurvich—of attempts to intimidate witnesses, of engaging in criminal conspiracy and of inciting to such felonies as perjury, criminal defamation and public bribery. How do you respond to these charges?

GARRISON: I've stopped beating my wife. All the charges you enumerate have been made with one purpose in mind—to place our office on the defensive and make us waste valuable time answering allegations that have no basis in fact. Also involved is a psychological by-product valuable to those who don't want the truth about Kennedy's assassination to become known: The very repetition of a charge lends it a certain credibility, since people have a tendency

to believe that where there's smoke, there's fire—although I find it difficult to believe that the public will put much credence in most of the dastardly deeds I've been accused of in the past few months. Just recently, for example, the rumor went around that my staff was peddling marijuana to high school students and that one of our major witnesses had just confessed that his testimony was based on a dream induced by an overdose of LSD. We've also been accused of planning an attack on the local FBI office with guns loaded with red pepper, having stolen money from our own investigative files and having threatened to shoot one witness in the derriere with an exotic gun propelling truth-serum darts. I just hope they never find out about my involvement in the Boston Brinks robbery. I must admit, however, that I'm beginning to worry about the cumulative effect of this propaganda blitzkrieg on potential jurors for the trial of Clay Shaw. I don't know how long they can withstand the drumbeat obligato of charges exonerating the defendant and convicting the prosecutor. For months now, the establishment's artillery units have been pounding away at the two themes NBC focused on—that my office uses "improper methods" with regard to witnesses and that we don't really have a case against Mr. Shaw and he should never be brought to trial. I hope you'll give me the chance to answer each of these charges in detail; but first, let me elaborate a bit on the methods we employ in this or any other investigation. My office has been one of the most scrupulous in the country with regard to the protection of individual rights. I've been on record for years in law journals and books as championing the rights of the individual against the oppressive power of the state. My office moved in and prevented police seizure from bookstores of books arbitrarily labeled "obscene." I intervened and managed to persuade the Louisiana legislature to remove a provision from its new code of criminal procedure that would allow judges to reach out from the bench and cite newsmen for contempt if they penned anything embarrassing to the judges. My office has investigated cases where we had already obtained convictions; and on discovering new evidence indicating that the defendant was not guilty, we've obtained a reversal of the verdict. In over five years of office, I have never had a single case reversed because of the use of improper methods—a record I'll match with any other D. A. in the country. In this particular case, I've taken unusual steps to protect the rights of the defendant and assure him a fair trial. Before we introduced the testimony of our witnesses, we made them undergo independent verifying tests, including polygraph examination, truth serum and hypnosis. We thought this would be hailed as an

improper method step in jurisprudence; instead, the press turned around and hinted that we had drugged our witnesses or given them posthypnotic suggestions to testify falsely. After arresting Mr. Shaw, we filed a motion for a preliminary hearing—a proceeding that essentially operates in the defendant's favor. Such a hearing is generally requested by the defense, and it was virtually unheard of that the motion be filed by the state, which under the law has the right to charge a defendant outright, without any evaluation by a judge of the pending charges. But I felt that because of the enormity of this accusation, we should lean over backward and give the defendant every chance. A three-judge panel heard our evidence against Mr. Shaw and his attorneys' rebuttals and ordered him indicted for conspiracy to assassinate the President. And I might add here that it's a matter of record that my relationship with the judiciary of our fair city is not a Damon-Pythias camaraderie. Once the judges had handed down their decision, we could have immediately filed a charge against the defendant just by signing it and depositing it with the city clerk—the customary method of charging a defendant. Nevertheless, out of concern for Mr. Shaw's rights, we voluntarily presented the case to a blue-ribbon grand jury. If this grand jury had failed to indict Mr. Shaw, our case would have been dead as a doornail. But the grand jury, composed of 12 eminent New Orleans citizens, heard our evidence and indicted the defendant for participation in a conspiracy to assassinate John Kennedy. In a further effort to protect the rights of the defendant, and in the face of the endlessly reiterated accusation that we have no case against him—despite the unanimous verdict of the grand jury and the judges at the preliminary hearing—I have studiously refrained from making any public statement critical of the defendant or prejudging his guilt. Of course, this puts me at a considerable disadvantage when the press claims I have no case against him, because the only way I could convince them of the strength of my case is to throw open our files and let them examine the testimony of all our witnesses. Apart from the injustice such an act would do Mr. Shaw, it could get our whole case thrown out of court on the grounds that we had prejudged the defendant's rights by pretrial publicity. So I won't fall into that particular trap, whatever the provocation. I only wish the press would allow our case to stand or fall on its merits in court. It appears that certain elements of the mass media have an active interest in preventing this case from ever coming to trial at all and find it necessary to employ against me every smear device in the book. To read the press accounts of my investigation—my "circus," I should say—I'm a cross

between Al Capone and Attila the Hun, ruthlessly hounding innocent men, depriving their legal rights, bribing and threatening witnesses and in general violating every canon of legal ethics. My God, anybody who employs the kind of methods that elements of the news media attribute to me should not only not be a district attorney, he should be disbarred. This case has taught me the difference between image and reality, and the power of the mythmakers. But I know I've done everything possible to conduct this investigation with honesty and integrity and with full respect for the civil rights of the defendant. But a blanket denial of charges against me isn't going to convince anyone, so why don't we consider them one by one?

PLAYBOY: All right. The May 15th issue of *Newsweek* charged that two of your investigators offered David Ferrie's former roommate, Alvin Beauboeuf, \$3000 and an airline job if he would help substantiate your charges against Clay Shaw. How do you answer this accusation?

GARRISON: Mr. Beauboeuf was one of the two men who accompanied David Ferrie on a mysterious trip from New Orleans to Texas on the day of the assassination, so naturally we were interested in him from the very start of our investigation. At first he showed every willingness to cooperate with our office; but after Ferrie's death, somebody gave him a free trip to Washington. From that moment on, a change came over Beauboeuf; he refused to cooperate with us any further and he made the charges against my investigators to which you refer. Fortunately, Beauboeuf had signed an affidavit on April 12th—well after the alleged bribe offer was supposed to have been made—affirming that “no representative of the New Orleans Parish district attorney's office has ever asked me to do anything but to tell the truth. Any inference or statement by anyone to the contrary has no basis in fact.” As soon as his attorney began broadcasting his charges, we asked the New Orleans police department to thoroughly investigate the matter. And on June 12th, the police department—which is not, believe me, in the pocket of the district attorney's office—released a report concluding that exhaustive investigation by the police intelligence branch had cleared my staff of any attempt to bribe or threaten Beauboeuf into giving untrue testimony. There was no mention of this report, predictably enough, in *Newsweek*. Let me make one thing clear, though: Like every police department and district attorney's office across the country, we have sums set aside to pay informers for valuable information—but we would never suborn perjury. This isn't because we're saints—short cuts like that could be awfully tempting in a frustrating case—but because we're realistic enough to know that any witness who can be bought by us can

also be bought by the other side. So, not only is it ethically objectionable, to assume that our investigators travel around the country with bags of money trying to bribe witnesses to lie on the witness stand. We just don't operate that way.

PLAYBOY: On an NBC television special, “The J.F.K. Conspiracy: The Case of Jim Garrison,” a former Turkish-bathhouse operator in New Orleans, Fred Leemans, claimed that one of your aides offered him money to testify that Clay Shaw had frequented his establishment with Lee Harvey Oswald. Do you also deny this charge?

GARRISON: Yes; and it's a perfect illustration of the point I was just making about how easy it is for the other side to buy witnesses and then charge us with its own misconduct. Mr. Leemans came to us in early May, volunteering testimony to the effect that he had often seen a man named Clay Bertrand in his bathhouse, sometimes accompanied by men he described as “Latin.” In a sworn affidavit, Leemans said he had also seen a young man called Lee with Bertrand on four or five occasions—a man who fits the description of Lee Harvey Oswald. Leemans also identified the Clay Bertrand who had frequented his establishment as Clay Shaw. Now, this was important testimony, and initially we were favorably impressed with Mr. Leemans. But then we started receiving calls from him demanding money. Well, I've told you our policy on this, and the answer was a flat no. He was quiet for a while and then he called and asked if we would approve if he sold his story to a magazine, since he badly needed money. We refused to give him such approval. Apparently, the National Broadcasting Company was able to establish a warmer relationship with Mr. Leemans. In any case, he now says that he didn't really lie to us; he just “told us what he thought we wanted to hear.” I'm sure he was equally cooperative with NBC—although he's beginning to spread his favors around. When a reporter asked him for more information after the broadcast, Leemans refused, explaining that he was saving himself for the Associated Press, “since I want to make something out of this.” I would like to make one personal remark about Mr. Leemans. I don't know if he was lying to us initially or not—though I suspect from other evidence in my possession that his statement as he first gave it was accurate—but anybody, no matter what his financial straits, who tries to make a fast buck off the assassination of John Kennedy is several rungs below the anthropoid ape on the evolutionary scale.

PLAYBOY: On this same NBC show, newsman Frank McGee claimed that NBC investigators had discovered that your two key witnesses against Clay Shaw—Perry Russo and Vernon Bundy

—both failed polygraph tests prior to the grand jury. In the case of Russo, who claimed to have attended a meeting at David Ferrie's apartment where Shaw, Oswald and Ferrie plotted the assassination, NBC said that “Russo's answers to a series of questions indicate, in the language of the polygraph operator, ‘deception criteria.’” He was asked if he knew Clay Shaw. He was asked if he knew Lee Harvey Oswald. His ‘yes’ answer to both of these questions indicated ‘deception criteria.’” Did Bundy and Russo fail their lie-detector tests?

GARRISON: No, and NBC's allegations in this area are about as credible as its other charges. The men who administered both polygraph tests flatly deny that Russo and Bundy failed the test. I'll offer right now to make Russo's and Bundy's polygraph tests accessible to any reputable investigator or reporter the day Clay Shaw's trial begins; I can't do it before that, because I'm restrained from releasing material pertaining to Shaw's guilt or innocence. Just for your information, though, the veracity of Bundy and Russo has been affirmed not only through polygraph tests but through hypnosis and the administration of sodium amylal—truth serum. I want to make a proposition to the president of NBC: If this charge is true, then I will resign as district attorney of New Orleans. If it's untrue, however, then the president of NBC should resign. Just in case he thinks I'm kidding, I'm ready to meet with him at any time to select a mutually acceptable committee to determine once and for all the truth or falsehood of this charge. In all fairness, however, I must add that the fact Bundy and Russo passed their polygraph tests is *not*, in and of itself, irrefutable proof that they were telling the truth; that's why we administered the other tests. The lie detector isn't a foolproof technique. A man well rehearsed and in complete control of himself can master those reactions that would register on the polygraph as deception criteria and get away with blatant lies, while someone who is extremely nervous and anxiety-ridden could tell the truth and have it register as a lie. Much also depends on who administers the test, since it can easily be rigged. For example, Jack Ruby took a lie-detector test for the Warren Commission and told lie after outright lie—even little lies that could be easily checked—and yet the Warren Commission concluded that he passed the test. So the polygraph is only one weapon in the arsenal we use to verify a witness' testimony, and we have never considered it conclusive; we have abundant documentation to corroborate their stories.

PLAYBOY: Two convicts, Miguel Torres

and John Cancler. Bundy admitted having lied in his testimony linking Clay Shaw to Lee Oswald. Do you dismiss this as just another NBC fabrication?

GARRISON: Messrs. Cancler and Torres were both convicted by my office, as were almost half the men in the state penitentiary, and I'm sure the great majority of them have little love for the man who sent them up. I don't know if they fabricated their stories in collusion with NBC or on their own for motives of revenge, but I'm convinced from what I know of Vernon Bundy that his testimony was truthful. NBC manipulated the statements of Cancler and Torres to give the impression to the viewer that he was watching a trial on television—*my trial*—and that these “objective” witnesses were saying exactly what they would say in a court of law. Actually—and NBC scrupulously avoided revealing this to its audience—their “testimony” was not under oath, there was no opportunity for cross-examination or the presentation of rebuttal witnesses, and the statements of Cancler, Torres and all the rest of NBC's road company were edited so that the public would hear only those elements of their story that would damage our case. The rules of evidence and adversary procedure, I might add, have been developed over many years precisely to prevent this kind of phony side show. Of course, these two convicts have been used against my office in a variety of respects. Miguel Torres also claims I offered him a full pardon, a vacation in Florida and an ounce of heroin if he would testify that Clay Shaw had made homosexual overtures to him on the street. What on earth that would have established relevant to this case I still don't know, but that's his story. I think it was actually rather cheap of me to offer Torres only an ounce of heroin; that wouldn't have lasted out his vacation. A kilo would be more like it. After all, I'm not stingy. Torres' friend John Cancler, a burglar, has also charged that one of my investigators tried to induce him to burglarize Clay Shaw's house and plant false evidence there, but he refused because he would not have such a heinous sin on his conscience. I suppose that's why Cancler's prison nickname is “John the Baptist.” I can assure you, if we ever wanted to burglarize Shaw's home—which we never did—John the Baptist would be the last man on earth we'd pick for the job. By the way, Mr. Cancler was called before the grand jury and asked if he had told the truth to NBC. He replied: “I refuse to answer on the grounds that my answer might incriminate me”—and was promptly sentenced to six months in prison and a \$500 fine for contempt of court.

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NBC also claimed to have discovered that “Clay, or Clem, Bertrand does exist. Clem Bertrand is not his real name. It is a pseudonym used by a homosexual in New Orleans. For his protection, we will not disclose the real name of the man known as Clem Bertrand. His real name has been given to the Department of Justice. He is not Clay Shaw.” Doesn't this undermine your entire case against Shaw?

GARRISON: Your faith in NBC's veracity is touching and indicates that the Age of Innocence is not yet over. NBC does not have the real Clay Bertrand; the man whose name NBC so melodramatically turned over to the Justice Department is that of Eugene Davis, a New Orleans bar owner, who has firmly denied under oath that he has ever used the name Clay, or Clem, Bertrand. We know from incontrovertible evidence in our possession who the real Clay Bertrand is—and we will prove it in court. But to make this whole thing a little clearer, let me tell you the genesis of the whole “Clay Bertrand” story. A New Orleans lawyer, Dean Andrews, told the Warren Commission that a few months before the assassination of President Kennedy, Lee Harvey Oswald and a group of “gay Mexicanos” came to his office and requested Andrews' aid in having Oswald's Marine Corps undesirable discharge changed to an honorable discharge; Oswald subsequently returned alone with other legal problems. Andrews further testified that the day after President Kennedy was assassinated, he received a call from Clay Bertrand, who asked him to rush to Dallas to represent Oswald. Andrews claims he subsequently saw Bertrand in a New Orleans bar, but Bertrand fled when Andrews approached him. This was intriguing testimony, although the Warren Commission dismissed it out of hand; and in 1964, Mark Lane traveled to New Orleans to speak to Andrews. He found him visibly frightened. “I'll take you to dinner,” Andrews told Lane, “but I can't talk about the case. I called Washington and they told me that if I said anything, I might get a bullet in the head.” For the same reason, he has refused to cooperate with my office in this investigation. *The New York Times* reported on February 26th that “Mr. Andrews said he had not talked to Mr. Garrison because such talk might be dangerous, but added that he believed he was being ‘tailed.’” Andrews told our grand jury that he could not say Clay Shaw was Clay Bertrand and he could not say he wasn't. But the day after NBC's special, Andrews broke his silence and said, yes, Clay Shaw is not Clem Bertrand and identified the real Clay Bertrand as Eugene Davis. The only trouble is, Andrews and Davis have known each other

for years and have been seen frequently in each other's company. Andrews has lied so often and about so many aspects of this case that the New Orleans Parish grand jury has indicted him for perjury. I feel sorry for him, since he's afraid of getting a bullet in his head, but he's going to have to go to trial for perjury. [Andrews has since been convicted.]

PLAYBOY: You expressed your reaction to the NBC show in concrete terms on July seventh, when you formally charged Walter Sheridan, the network's special investigator for the broadcast, with attempting to bribe your witness Perry Russo. Do you really have a case against Sheridan, or is this just a form of harassment?

GARRISON: The reason we haven't lost a major case in over five years in office is that we do not charge a man unless we can make it stick in court. And I'm not in the business of harassing anybody. Sheridan was charged because evidence was brought to us indicating that he attempted to bribe Perry Russo by offering him free transportation to California, free lodgings and a job once there, payment of all legal fees in any extradition proceedings and immunity from my office. Mr. Russo has stated that Sheridan asked his help “to wreck the Garrison investigation” and “offered to set me up in California, protect my job and guarantee that Garrison would never get me extradited.” According to Russo, Sheridan added that both NBC and the CIA were out to scuttle my case.

I think it's significant that the chief investigator for this ostensibly objective broadcast starts telling people the day he arrives in town that he is going to “destroy Garrison”—this at the same time he is unciously assuring me that NBC wanted only the truth and he had an entirely open mind on my case. Let me tell you something about Walter Sheridan's background, and maybe you'll understand his true role in all this. Sheridan was one of the bright, hard young investigators who entered the Justice Department under Bobby Kennedy. He was assigned to nail Jimmy Hoffa. Sheridan employed a wide variety of highly questionable tactics in the Justice Department's relentless drive against Hoffa; he was recently subpoenaed to testify in connection with charges that he wire-tapped the offices of Hoffa's associates and then played back incriminating tapes to them, warning that unless they testified for the Government, they would be destroyed along with Hoffa. A few years ago, Sheridan left the Justice Department—officially, at least—and went to work for NBC. No honest reporter out for a story would have so completely prejudged the situation and been willing to employ such tactics. I think it's likely that in his zeal to destroy my case, he exceeded the authority granted him by NBC's executives in New

York. I get the impression that the majority of NBC executives probably thought Sheridan's team came down here in an uncompromising search for the truth. When Sheridan overstepped himself and it became obvious that the broadcast was, to say the least, not objective, NBC realized it was in a touchy position. Cooler heads prevailed and I was allowed to present our case to the American people. For that, at least, I'm singularly grateful to Walter Sheridan.

PLAYBOY: How do you respond to the charge of your critics—including NBC—that you launched this probe for political reasons, hoping the attendant publicity would be a springboard to a Senate seat or to the governorship?

GARRISON: I'd have to be a terribly cynical and corrupt man to place another human being on trial for conspiracy to murder the President of the United States just to gratify my political ambition. But I guess there are a lot of people around the country, especially after NBC's attack, who think that's just the kind of man I am. That rather saddens me. I'm no Albert Schweitzer, but I could never do a thing like that. I derive no pleasure from prosecuting a man, even though I know he's guilty; do you think I could sleep at night or look at myself in the mirror in the morning if I hounded an innocent man? You know, I always received much more satisfaction as a defense attorney in obtaining an acquittal for a client than I ever have as a D. A. in obtaining a conviction. All my interests and sympathies tend to be on the side of the individual as opposed to the state. So this is really the worst charge that anyone could make against me—that in order to get my name in the paper, or to advance politically, I would destroy another human being. This kind of charge reveals a good deal about the personality of the people who make it; to impute such motives to another man is to imply you're harboring them yourself. But to look at a different aspect of your question, I'm inclined to challenge the whole premise that launching an investigation like this holds any political advantages for me. A politically ambitious man would hardly be likely to challenge the massed power of the Federal Government and criticize so many honorable figures and distinguished agencies. Actually, this charge is an argument in favor of my investigation: Would such a slimy type, eager to profiteer on the assassination, jeopardize his political ambitions if he didn't have an ironclad case? If I were really the ambitious monster they paint me, why would I climb out on such a limb and then saw it off? Unless he had the facts, it would be the last thing a politically ambitious man would do. I was perfectly aware that I might have signed my political death warrant the moment I launched this case—but I

some light on John Kennedy's assassination. As a matter of fact, after this last murderous year, I find myself thinking more and more about returning to private life and having time to read again, to get out in the sun and hit a golf ball. But before I do that, I'm going to break this case and let the public know the truth. I won't quit before that day. I wouldn't give the bastards the satisfaction.

PLAYBOY: According to your own former chief investigator, William Gurvich, the truth about the assassination has already been published in the Warren Report. After leaving your staff last June, he announced, "If there is any truth to any of Garrison's charges about there being a conspiracy, I haven't been able to find it." When members of your own staff have no faith in your case, how do you expect the public to be impressed?

GARRISON: First of all, I won't deny for a minute that for at least three months I trusted Bill Gurvich implicitly. He was never my "chief investigator"—that's his own terminology—because there was no such position on my staff while he worked for me. But two days before Christmas 1966, Gurvich, who operates a private detective agency, visited my office and told me he'd heard of my investigation and thought I was doing a wonderful job. He presented me with a beautiful color-TV set and asked if he could be of use in any capacity. Well, right then and there, I should have sat back and asked myself a few searching questions—like how he had heard of my probe in the first place, since only the people we were questioning and a few of my staff, as far as I knew, were aware of what was going on at that time. We had been under way for only five weeks, remember. And I should also have recalled the old adage about Greeks bearing gifts. But I was desperately understaffed—I had only six aides available to work on the assassination inquiry full time—and here comes a trained private investigator offering his services free of charge. It was like a gift from the gods. So I set Gurvich to work; and for the next couple of months, he did an adequate job of talking to witnesses, taking photographs, etc. But then, around March, I learned that he had been seeing Walter Sheridan of NBC. Well, this didn't bother me at first, because I didn't know then the role Sheridan was playing in this whole affair. But after word got back to me from my witnesses about Sheridan's threats and harassment, I began keeping a closer eye on Bill. I still didn't really think he was any kind of a double agent, but I couldn't help wondering why he was rubbing elbows with people like that. Now, don't forget that Gurvich claims he became totally disgusted with our investigation at the time of Clay Shaw's arrest—yet for several months afterward he con-

tinued to be enthusiastic about every aspect of our case, and I have a dozen witnesses who will testify to that effect. I guess this was something that should have tipped me off about Bill: He was always enthusiastic, never doubtful or cautionary, even when I or one of my staff threw out a hypothesis that on reflection we realized was wrong. And I began to notice how he would pick my mind for every scrap of fact pertaining to the case. So I grew suspicious and took him off the sensitive areas of the investigation and relegated him to chauffeuring and routine clerical duties. This seemed to really bother him, and every day he would come into my office and pump me for information, complaining that he wasn't being told enough about the case. I still had nothing concrete against him and I didn't want to be unjust, but I guess my manner must have cooled perceptibly, because one day about two months before he surfaced in Washington, Bill just vanished from our sight. And with him, I'm sorry to confess, vanished a copy of our master file. How do you explain such behavior? It's possible that Bill joined us initially for reasons of opportunism, seeing a chance to get in at the beginning of an earth-shaking case, and subsequently chickened out when he saw the implacable determination of some powerful agencies to destroy our investigation and discredit everyone associated with it. But I really don't believe Bill is that much of a coward. It's also possible that those who want to prevent an investigation learned early what we were doing and made a decision to plant somebody on the inside of the investigation. Let me stress that I have no secret documents or monitored telephone calls to support this hypothesis; it just seems to me the most logical explanation for Bill's behavior. Let me put it this way: If you were in charge of the CIA and willing to spend scores of millions of dollars on such relatively penny-ante projects as infiltrating the National Students Association, wouldn't you make an effort to infiltrate an investigation that could seriously damage the prestige of your agency?

PLAYBOY: How could your probe damage the prestige of the CIA and cause them to take countermeasures against you?

GARRISON: For the simple reason that a number of the men who killed the President were former employees of the CIA involved in its anti-Castro underground activities in and around New Orleans. The CIA knows their identity. So do I—and our investigation has established this without the shadow of a doubt. Let me stress one thing, however: We have no evidence that any official of the CIA was involved with the conspiracy that led to the President's death.

PLAYBOY: Do you lend no credence, then, to the charges of a former CIA agent,

PLAYBOY

J. Garrett Underhill, that there was a conspiracy within the CIA to assassinate Kennedy?

GARRISON: I've become familiar with the case of Gary Underhill, and I've been able to ascertain that he was not the type of man to make wild or unsubstantiated charges. Underhill was an intelligence agent in World War Two and an expert on military affairs whom the Pentagon considered one of the country's top authorities on limited warfare. He was on good personal terms with the top brass in the Defense Department and the ranking officials in the CIA. He wasn't a full-time CIA agent, but he occasionally performed "special assignments" for the Agency. Several days after the President's assassination, Underhill appeared at the home of friends in New Jersey, apparently badly shaken, and charged that Kennedy was killed by a small group within the CIA. He told friends he believed his own life was in danger. We can't learn any more from Underhill, I'm afraid, because shortly afterward, he was found shot to death in his Washington apartment. The coroner ruled suicide, but he had been shot behind the left ear and the pistol was found under his left side—and Underhill was right-handed.

PLAYBOY: Do you believe Underhill was murdered to silence him?

GARRISON: I don't believe it and I don't disbelieve it. All I know is that witnesses with vital evidence in this case are certainly bad insurance risks. In the absence of further and much more conclusive evidence to the contrary, however, we must assume that the plotters were acting on their own rather than on CIA orders when they killed the President. As far as we have been able to determine, they were not in the pay of the CIA at the time of the assassination—and this is one of the reasons the President was murdered; I'll explain later what I mean by that. But the CIA could not face up to the American people and admit that its former employees had conspired to assassinate the President; so from the moment Kennedy's heart stopped beating, the Agency attempted to sweep the whole conspiracy under the rug. The CIA has spared neither time nor the taxpayers' money in its efforts to hide the truth about the assassination from the American people. In this respect, it has become an accessory after the fact in the assassination.

PLAYBOY: Do you have any conclusive evidence to support these accusations?

GARRISON: I've never revealed this before, but for at least six months, my office and home telephones—and those of every member of my staff—have been monitored. If there is as little substance to this investigation as the press and the Government allege, why would anyone go to all that trouble? I leave it to your judgment if the monitoring of our phones is the

work of the Women's Christian Temperance Union or the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce.

PLAYBOY: That's hardly conclusive evidence.

GARRISON: I'll need a book to list all the indications. But let's start with the fact that most of the attorneys for the hostile witnesses and defendants were hired by the CIA—through one or another of its covers. For example, a New Orleans lawyer representing Alvin Beauboeuf, who has charged me with every kind of unethical practice except child molesting—I expect that allegation to come shortly before Shaw's trial—flew with Beauboeuf to Washington immediately after my office subpoenaed him, where Beauboeuf was questioned by a "retired" intelligence officer in the offices of the Justice Department. This trip was paid for, as are the lawyer's legal fees, by the CIA—in other words, with our tax dollars. Another lawyer, Stephen Plotkin, who represents Gordon Novel [another of Garrison's key witnesses], has admitted he is paid by the CIA—and has also admitted his client is a CIA agent; you may have seen that story on page 96 of *The New York Times*, next to ship departures. Plotkin, incidentally, sued me for \$10,000,000 for defaming his client and sued a group of New Orleans businessmen financing my investigation for \$50,000,000—which meant, in effect, that the CIA was suing us. As if they need the money. But my attorney filed a motion for a deposition to be taken from Novel, which meant that he would have to return to my jurisdiction to file his suit and thus be liable for questioning in the conspiracy case. Rather than come down to New Orleans and face the music, Novel dropped his suit and sacrificed a possible \$60,000,000 judgment. Now, there's a man of principle; he knows there are some things more important than money.

PLAYBOY: Do you also believe Clay Shaw's lawyers are being paid by the CIA?

GARRISON: I can't comment directly on that, since it relates to Shaw's trial. But I think the clincher, as far as Washington's obstruction of our probe goes, is the consistent refusal of the Federal Government to make accessible to us any information about the roles of the CIA, anti-Castro Cuban exiles and the paramilitary right in the assassination. There is, without doubt, a conspiracy by elements of the Federal Government to keep the facts of this case from ever becoming known—a conspiracy that is the logical extension of the initial conspiracy by the CIA to conceal vital evidence from the Warren Commission.

PLAYBOY: What "vital evidence" did the CIA withhold from the Warren Commission?

GARRISON: A good example is Commission Exhibit number 237. This is a photograph of a stocky, balding, middle-

aged man published without explanation or identification in the 26 volumes of the Warren Report. There's a significant story behind Exhibit number 237. Throughout the late summer and fall of 1963, Lee Oswald was shepherded in Dallas and New Orleans by a CIA "baby sitter" who watched over Oswald's activities and stayed with him. My office knows who he is and what he looks like.

PLAYBOY: Are you implying that Oswald was working for the CIA?

GARRISON: Let me finish and you can decide for yourself. When Oswald went to Mexico City in an effort to obtain a visa for travel to Cuba, this CIA agent accompanied him. Now, at this particular time, Mexico was the only Latin-American nation maintaining diplomatic ties with Cuba, and leftists and Communists from all over the hemisphere traveled to the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City for visas to Cuba. The CIA, quite properly, had placed a hidden movie camera in a building across the street from the embassy and filmed everyone coming and going. The Warren Commission, knowing this, had an assistant legal counsel ask the FBI for a picture of Oswald and his companion on the steps of the embassy, and the FBI, in turn, filed an affidavit saying they had obtained the photo in question from the CIA. The only trouble is that the CIA supplied the Warren Commission with a phony photograph. The photograph of an "unidentified man" published in the 26 volumes is *not* the man who was filmed with Oswald on the steps of the Cuban Embassy, as alleged by the CIA. It's perfectly clear that the actual picture of Oswald and his companion was suppressed and a fake photo substituted because the second man in the picture was working for the CIA in 1963, and his identification as a CIA agent would have opened up a whole can of worms about Oswald's ties with the Agency. To prevent this, the CIA presented the Warren Commission with fraudulent evidence—a pattern that repeats itself whenever the CIA submits evidence relating to Oswald's possible connection with any U.S. intelligence agency. The CIA lied to the Commission right down the line; and since the Warren Commission had no investigative staff of its own but had to rely on the FBI, the Secret Service and the CIA for its evidence, it's understandable why the Commission concluded that Oswald had no ties with American intelligence agencies.

PLAYBOY: What was the nature of these ties?

GARRISON: That's not altogether clear, at least insofar as his specific assignments are concerned; but we do have proof that Oswald was recruited by the

CIA in his Marine Corps days, he was mysteriously schooled in Russian and allowed to subscribe to *Pravda*. And shortly before his trip to the Soviet Union, we have learned, Oswald was trained as an intelligence agent at the CIA installation at Japan's Atsugi Air Force Base—which may explain why no disciplinary action was taken against him when he returned to the U.S. from the Soviet Union, even though he had supposedly defected with top-secret information about our radar networks. The money he used to return to the U.S., incidentally, was advanced to him by the State Department.

PLAYBOY: In an article for *Ramparts*, ex-FBI agent William Turner indicated that White Russian refugee George De Mohrenschildt may have been Oswald's CIA "baby sitter" in Dallas. Have you found any links between the CIA and De Mohrenschildt?

GARRISON: I can't comment directly on that, but George De Mohrenschildt is certainly an enigmatic and intriguing character. Here you have a wealthy, cultured White Russian *émigré* who travels in the highest social circles—he was a personal friend of Mrs. Hugh Auchincloss, Jackie Kennedy's mother—suddenly developing an intimate relationship with an impoverished ex-Marine like Lee Oswald. What did they discuss—last year's season at Biarritz, or how to beat the bank at Monte Carlo? And Mr. De Mohrenschildt has a penchant for popping up in the most interesting places at the most interesting times—for example, in Haiti just before a joint Cuban exile-CIA venture to topple Duvalier and use the island as a springboard for an invasion of Cuba; and in Guatemala, another CIA training ground, the day before the Bay of Pigs invasion. We have a good deal more information about Oswald's CIA contacts in Dallas and New Orleans—most of which we discovered by sheer chance—but there are still whole areas of inquiry blocked from us by the CIA's refusal to cooperate with our investigation. For public consumption, the CIA claims not to have been concerned with Oswald prior to the assassination. But one thing is certain: Despite these pious protestations, the CIA was very much aware of Oswald's activities well before the President's murder. In a notarized affidavit, State Department officer James D. Crowley states, "The first time I remember learning of Oswald's existence was when I received copies of a telegraphic message from the Central Intelligence Agency dated October 10, 1963, which contained information pertaining to his current activities." It would certainly be interesting to know what the CIA knew about Oswald six weeks before the assassination, but the contents of this particular message never reached the Warren Commission and remain a complete mystery. There are also 51

the National Archives pertaining to Lee Oswald and Jack Ruby. Technically, the members of the Commission had access to them; but in practice, any document the CIA wanted classified was shunted into the Archives without examination by the sleeping beauties on the Commission. Twenty-nine of these files are of particular interest, because their titles alone indicate that the CIA had extensive information on Oswald and Ruby before the assassination. A few of these documents are: CD 347, "Activity of Oswald in Mexico City"; CD 1054, "Information on Jack Ruby and Associates"; CD 692, "Reproduction of Official CIA Dossier on Oswald"; CD 1551, "Conversations Between Cuban President and Ambassador"; CD 698, "Reports of Travel and Activities of Oswald"; CD 943, "Allegations of Pfc. Eugene Dinkin re Assassination Plot"; and CD 971, "Telephone Calls to U.S. Embassy, Canberra, Australia, re Planned Assassination." The titles of these documents are all we have to go on, but they're certainly intriguing. For example, the public has heard nothing about phone calls to the U.S. Embassy in Canberra, warning in advance of the assassination, nor have we been told anything about a Pfc. Dinkin who claims to have knowledge of an assassination plot. One of the top-secret ones that most intrigues me is CD 931, which is entitled "Oswald's Access to Information About the U-2." I have 24 years of military experience behind me, on active duty and in the reserves, and I've never had any access to the U-2; in fact, I've never seen one. But apparently this "self-proclaimed Marxist," Lee Harvey Oswald, who we're assured had no ties to any Government agency, had access to information about the nation's most secret high-altitude reconnaissance plane. Of course, it may be that none of these CIA files reveals anything sinister about Lee Harvey Oswald or hints in any way that he was employed by our Government. But then, why are the 51 CIA documents classified top secret in the Archives and inaccessible to the public for 75 years? I'm 45, so there's no hope for me, but I'm already training my eight-year-old son to keep himself physically fit so that on one glorious September morn in 2038 he can walk into the National Archives in Washington and find out what the CIA knew about Lee Harvey Oswald. If there's a further extension of the top-secret classification, this may become a generational affair, with questions passed down from father to son in the manner of the ancient runic bards. But someday, perhaps, we'll find out what Oswald was doing messing around with the U-2. Of course, there are some CIA documents we'll never see. When the Warren Commission asked to see a secret CIA memo on Oswald's activities in Russia that had

a State Department letter on Oswald's Russian stay, word came back that the Agency was terribly sorry, but the secret memo had been destroyed while being photocopied. This unfortunate accident took place on November 23, 1963, a day on which there must have occurred a great deal of spontaneous combustion around Washington. **PLAYBOY:** John A. McCone, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, has said of Oswald: "The Agency never contacted him, interviewed him, talked with him or received or solicited any reports or information from him or communicated with him in any manner. Lee Harvey Oswald was never associated or connected directly or indirectly, in any way whatsoever, with the Agency." Why do you refuse to accept McCone's word?

GARRISON: The head of the CIA, it seems to me, would think long and hard before he admitted that former employees of his had been involved in the murder of the President of the United States—even if they weren't acting on behalf of the Agency when they did it. In any case, the CIA's past record hardly induces faith in the Agency's veracity. CIA officials lied about their role in the overthrow of the Arbenz Guzman regime in Guatemala; they lied about their role in the overthrow of Mossadegh in Iran; they lied about their role in the abortive military revolt against Sukarno in 1958; they lied about the U-2 incident; and they certainly lied about the Bay of Pigs. If the CIA is ready to lie even about its successes—as in Guatemala and Iran—do you seriously believe its director would tell the truth in a case as explosive as this? Of course, CIA officials grow so used to lying, so steeped in deceit, that after a while I think they really become incapable of distinguishing truth and falsehood. Or, in an Orwellian sense, perhaps they come to believe that truth is what contributes to national security, and falsehood is anything detrimental to national security. John McCone would swear he's a Croatian dwarf if he thought it would advance the interests of the CIA—which he automatically equates with the national interest.

PLAYBOY: Let's get down to the facts of the assassination, as you see them. When—and why—did you begin to doubt the conclusions of the Warren Report?

GARRISON: Until as recently as November of 1966, I had complete faith in the Warren Report. As a matter of fact, I viewed its most vocal critics with the same skepticism that much of the press now views me—which is why I can't condemn the mass media too harshly for their cynical approach, except in the handful of cases where newsmen seem to be in active collusion with Washington to torpedo our investigation. Of course, my faith in the Report was grounded in

ignorance, since I had never read the Warren Report. Mark Lane says, "The only way you can believe the Report is not to have read it." But then, in November, I visited New York City with Senator Russell Long; and when the subject of the assassination came up, he expressed grave doubts about the Warren Commission's conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin. Now, this disturbed me, because here was the Majority Whip of the U.S. Senate speaking, not some publicity hound with an ideological ax to grind; and if at this late juncture he still entertained serious reservations about the Commission's determinations, maybe there was more to the assassination than met the eye. So I began reading every book and magazine article on the assassination I could get my hands on—my tombstone may be inscribed "CURIOSITY KILLED THE D.A."—and I found my own doubts growing. Finally, I put aside all other business and started to wade through the Warren Commission's own 26 volumes of supportive evidence and testimony. That was the clincher. It's impossible for anyone possessed of reasonable objectivity and a fair degree of intelligence to read those 26 volumes and not reach the conclusion that the Warren Commission was wrong in every one of its major conclusions pertaining to the assassination. For me, that was the end of innocence.

PLAYBOY: Do you mean to imply that the Warren Commission deliberately concealed or falsified the facts of the assassination?

GARRISON: No, you don't need any explanation more sinister than incompetence to account for the Warren Report. Though I didn't know it at the time, the Commission simply didn't have all the facts, and many of those they had were fraudulent, as I've pointed out—thanks to the evidence withheld and manufactured by the CIA. If you add to this the fact that most of the Commission members had already presumed Oswald's guilt and were merely looking for facts to confirm it—and in the process tranquilize the American public—you'll realize why the Commission was such a dismal failure. But in the final analysis, it doesn't make a damn bit of difference whether the Commission members were sincere patriots or mountebanks; the question is whether Lee Oswald killed the President alone and unaided; if the evidence doesn't support that conclusion—and it doesn't—a thousand honorable men sitting shoulder to shoulder along the banks of the Potomac won't change the facts.

PLAYBOY: So you began your investigation of the President's assassination on nothing stronger than your own doubts and the theories of the Commission's critics?

GARRISON: No, please don't put words in my mouth. The works of the critics—particularly Edward Epstein, Harold

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general doubts about the assassination; but more importantly, they led me into specific areas of inquiry. After I realized that something was seriously wrong, I had no alternative but to face the fact that Oswald had arrived in Dallas only a short time before the assassination and that prior to that time he had lived in New Orleans for over six months. I became curious about what this alleged assassin was doing while under my jurisdiction, and my staff began an investigation of Oswald's activities and contacts in the New Orleans area. We interviewed people the Warren Commission had never questioned, and a whole new world began opening up. As I studied Oswald's movements in Dallas, my mind turned back to the aftermath of the assassination in 1963, when my office questioned three men—David Ferrie, Alvin Beauboeuf and Melvin Coffey—on suspicion of being involved in the assassination. I began to wonder if we hadn't dismissed these three men too lightly, and we reopened our investigation into their activities.

PLAYBOY: Why did you become interested in Ferrie and his associates in November 1963?

GARRISON: To explain that, I'll have to tell you something about the operation of our office. I believe we have one of the best district attorney's offices in the country. We have no political appointments and, as a result, there's a tremendous amount of *esprit* among our staff and an enthusiasm for looking into unanswered questions. That's why we got together the day after the assassination and began examining our files and checking out every political extremist, religious fanatic and kook who had ever come to our attention. And one of the names that sprang into prominence was that of David Ferrie. When we checked him out, as we were doing with innumerable other suspicious characters, we discovered that on November 22nd he had traveled to Texas to go "duck hunting" and "ice skating." Well, naturally, this sparked our interest. We staked out his house and we questioned his friends, and when he came back—the first thing he did on his return, incidentally, was to contact a lawyer and then hide out for the night at a friend's room in another town—we pulled him and his two companions in for questioning. The story of Ferrie's activities that emerged was rather curious. He drove nine hours through a furious thunderstorm to Texas, then apparently gave up his plans to go duck hunting and instead went to an ice skating rink in Houston and stood waiting beside a pay telephone for two hours; he never put the skates on. We felt his movements were suspicious enough to justify his arrest and that of his friends, and we took them into custody. When we alerted the FBI, they expressed in-

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us to turn the three men over to them for questioning. We did, but Ferrie was released soon afterward and most of its report on him was classified top secret and secreted in the National Archives, where it will remain inaccessible to the public until September 2038 A.D. No one, including me, can see those pages.

PLAYBOY: Why do you believe the FBI report on Ferrie is classified?

GARRISON: For the same reason the President's autopsy X rays and photos and other vital evidence in this case are classified—because they would indicate the existence of a conspiracy, involving former employees of the CIA, to kill the President.

PLAYBOY: When you resumed your investigation of Ferrie three years later, did you discover any new evidence?

GARRISON: We discovered a whole mare's nest of underground activity involving the CIA, elements of the paramilitary right and militant anti-Castro exile groups. We discovered links between David Ferrie, Lee Oswald and Jack Ruby. We discovered, in short, what I had hoped *not* to find, despite my doubts about the Warren Commission—the existence of a well-organized conspiracy to assassinate John Kennedy, a conspiracy that came to fruition in Dallas on November 22, 1963, and in which David Ferrie played a vital role.

PLAYBOY: Accepting for a moment your contention that there was a conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy, have you been able to discover who was involved—in addition to Ferrie—how it was done and why?

GARRISON: Yes, I have. President Kennedy was killed for one reason: because he was working for a reconciliation with the U.S.S.R. and Castro's Cuba. His assassins were a group of fanatic anti-Communists with a fusion of interests in preventing Kennedy from achieving peaceful relations with the Communist world. On the operative level of the conspiracy, you find anti-Castro Cuban exiles who never forgave Kennedy for failing to send in U.S. air cover at the Bay of Pigs and who feared that the thaw following the Missile Crisis in October 1962 augured the total frustration of their plans to liberate Cuba. They believed sincerely that Kennedy had sold them out to the Communists. On a higher, control level, you find a number of people of ultra-right-wing persuasion—not simply conservatives, mind you, but people who could be described as neo-Nazi, including a small clique that had defected from the Minutemen because it considered the group "too liberal." These elements had their canteens ready and their guns loaded; they lacked only a target. After Kennedy's domestic moves toward racial integration and his

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(continued from page 74)

attempts to forge a peaceful foreign policy, as exemplified by his signing of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, they found that target. So both of these groups had a vital stake in changing U.S. foreign policy—ideological on the part of the paramilitary rightists and both ideological and personal with the anti-Castro exiles, many of whom felt they would never see their homes again if Kennedy's policy of *détente* was allowed to succeed. The CIA was involved with both of these groups. In the New Orleans area, where the conspiracy was hatched, the CIA was training a mixed bag of Minutemen, Cuban exiles and other anti-Castro adventurers north of Lake Pontchartrain for a foray into Cuba and an assassination attempt on Fidel Castro. David Ferrie, who operated on the "command" level of the ultra-rightists, was deeply involved in this effort. The CIA itself apparently did not take the *détente* too seriously until the late summer of 1963, because it maintained its financing and training of anti-Castro adventurers. There was, in fact, a triangulation of CIA-supported anti-Castro activity between Dallas—where Jack Ruby was involved in collecting guns and ammunition for the underground—and Miami and New Orleans, where most of the training was going on. But then, Kennedy, who had signed a secret agreement with Khrushchev after the Missile Crisis pledging not to invade Cuba if Russia would soft-pedal Castro's subversive activities in the Americas, began to crack down on CIA operations against Cuba. As a result, on July 31, 1963, the FBI raided the headquarters of the group of Cuban exiles and Minutemen training north of Lake Pontchartrain and confiscated all their guns and ammunition—despite the fact that the operation had the sanction of the CIA. This action may have sealed Kennedy's fate. By the early fall of 1963, Kennedy's plan for a *détente* with Cuba was in high gear. Ambassador William Attwood, a close personal friend of the late President, recounts that a thaw in U.S.-Cuban relations was definitely in the works at this time and "the President more than the State Department was interested in exploring the [Cuban] overture." One of the intermediaries between Castro and Kennedy was the late television commentator Lisa Howard, who met secretly with Ernesto Che Guevara to prepare peace terms between the U.S. and Castro. Miss Howard was arranging a conference between Bobby Kennedy and Guevara when the President was shot in Dallas. In a United Nations speech on October 7, 1963, Adlai Stevenson set forth the possibility of a termination of hostilities between the two countries

and on November 1961, Presidential aide McGeorge Bundy, who was acting as an intermediary in the secret discussions, told Ambassador Attwood that the President wanted to discuss his plans for a Cuban-American *détente* in depth with him right after "a brief trip to Dallas." The rest is history. One of the two heads of state involved in negotiating that *détente* is now dead, but the survivor, Fidel Castro, said on November 23rd that the assassination was the work of "elements in the U.S. opposed to peace," and the Cuban Foreign Ministry officially charged that "the Kennedy assassination was a provocation against world peace perfectly and minutely prepared by the most reactionary sectors of the United States." Most Americans at the time, myself included, thought this was just Communist propaganda. But Castro knew what he was talking about. A few weeks after the assassination, the Cuban ambassador to the UN, Dr. Carlos Lechuga, was instructed by Castro to begin "formal discussions" in the hope that Kennedy's peace plan would be carried on by his successor. Ambassador Attwood writes that "I informed Bundy and later was told that the Cuban exercise would be put on ice for a while—which it was and where it has been ever since." The assassins had achieved their aim.

PLAYBOY: This is interesting speculation, but isn't that all it is—speculation?

GARRISON: No, because we know enough about the key individuals involved in the conspiracy—Latinos and Americans alike—to know that this was their motive for the murder of John Kennedy. First of all, you have to understand the mentality of these people. Take the Cuban exiles involved; here are men, some of whom survived the Bay of Pigs, who for years had been whipped up by the CIA into a frenzy of anti-Castro hatred and who had been solemnly assured by American intelligence agencies that they were going to liberate their homeland with American support. They had one disappointment after another—the Bay of Pigs debacle, the failure to invade Cuba during the Missile Crisis, the effective crushing of their underground in Cuba by Castro's secret police. But they kept on hoping, and the CIA kept fanning their hopes. Then they listened to Kennedy's famous speech at American University on June 10, 1963, where he really kicked off the new drive for a *détente*, and they heard the President of the country in which they'd placed all their hope saying we must make peace with the Communists, since "we both breathe the same air." Well, this worries them, but the CIA continues financing and training their underground cadres, so there is still hope. And then suddenly, in the late summer of 1963, the CIA is forced by Presidential pressure to withdraw all funds and

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of the impact of this, particularly on the group here in New Orleans, which had been trained for months to make an assassination attempt on Castro and then found itself coolly jettisoned by its benefactors in Washington. These adventurers were worked up to a fever pitch; and when the CIA withdrew its support and they couldn't fight Castro, they picked their next victim—John F. Kennedy. That, in a nutshell, is the genesis of the assassination. President Kennedy died because he wanted peace.

PLAYBOY: How many people do you claim were involved in this alleged conspiracy?

GARRISON: Too many for their own security. If they had let fewer men in on the plot, we might never have stumbled onto it. But let me add one additional point here: The brief account I've just given you shouldn't be construed to indicate that any of the legitimate anti-Castro organizations were involved in the assassination—or that all Minutemen were implicated. Nor should the fact that there was a conspiracy from the paramilitary right be used to start a witch-hunt against conservatives in general, any more than Oswald's phony pro-Communist record should have been used to purge leftists from our national life. In this case, the very terminology of "right" and "left," which is essentially an economic definition, has little validity as a description of those fanatic war lovers who were ready to assassinate a President because he worked for peace. If you go far enough to either extreme of the political spectrum, Communist or fascist, you'll find hard-eyed men with guns who believe that anybody who doesn't think as they do should be incarcerated or exterminated. The assassination was less an ideological exercise than the frenzied revenge of a sick element in our society on a man who exemplified health and decency.

PLAYBOY: You've outlined the genesis of the alleged conspiracy as you see it. Will you now tell us how it was carried out—and by whom?

GARRISON: I won't be able to name names in all instances, because we're building cases against a number of the individuals involved. But I'll give you a brief sketch of how the conspiracy was organized, and then point by point we can go into the participants we know about so far and the role we believe each played. Let me stress at the outset that what I'm going to tell you is not idle speculation; we have facts, documents and reliable eyewitness testimony to corroborate much of it—though I can't lay all this evidence before you without jeopardizing the investigation. But there are many pieces of the jigsaw puzzle still missing. Not one of the conspirators has confessed his guilt, so we don't yet have an "inside" view of all the pre-assassination

planning. In order to fill in these gaps for you, I'll have to indulge in a bit of informed deduction and surmise. It may sound melodramatic, but you can best envisage the plot as a spider's web. At the center sit the organizers of the operation, men with close ties to U.S. and western-European intelligence agencies. One of them is a former associate of Jack Ruby in gun-smuggling activities and a dedicated neo-Nazi in close contact with neo-fascist movements in Great Britain, Germany, France and Italy. Radiating out from these key men, the strands of the web include a motley group of political adventurers united only in their detestation of Kennedy and their dedication to the reversal of his foreign policy. One such man was David Ferrie. Another member of this group is an individual who deliberately impersonated Lee Oswald before the assassination in order to incriminate him; we believe we know his identity. Several others, about whom we have evidence indicating that they helped supply weapons to the plotters, were the right-wing extremists I mentioned earlier who broke off from a fanatic paramilitary group because it was becoming "too liberal." Also involved is a band of anti-Castro adventurers who functioned on the second, or "operative," level of the conspiracy. These men include two Cuban exiles, one of whom failed a lie-detector test when he denied knowing in advance that Kennedy was going to be killed or having seen the weapons to be used in the assassination—and a number of men who fired at the President from three directions on November 22nd. The link between the "command" level and the Cuban exiles was an amorphous group called the Free Cuba Committee, which with CIA sanction had begun training north of Lake Pontchartrain for an assassination attempt on Fidel Castro, as I mentioned earlier. It was this group that was raided by the FBI on July 31st, 1963, and temporarily put out of commission. Our information indicates that it was shortly after this setback that the group switched direction and decided to assassinate John Kennedy instead of Fidel Castro, after the "betrayal" of the Bay of Pigs disaster. That's it in a nutshell, but I think the development of the conspiracy will become clearer if you ask me one by one about the individuals involved.

PLAYBOY: All right, let's begin with Clay Shaw. What was his role in the alleged conspiracy?

GARRISON: I'm afraid I can't comment even inferentially on anything pertaining to the evidence against Mr. Shaw, since he's facing trial in my jurisdiction.

PLAYBOY: Can you answer a charge about your case against him? On March second of this year, shortly after Shaw's arrest

Attorney General Ramsey Clark announced that Shaw "was included in an investigation in November and December of 1963 and on the evidence that the FBI has, there was no connection found between Shaw and the President's assassination." Why do you challenge the Attorney General's statement?

GARRISON: Because it was not true. The FBI did not clear Clay Shaw after the assassination. You don't have to take my word for it; *The New York Times* reported on June third that "The Justice Department said today that Clay Shaw, New Orleans businessman, was not investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. . . . The statement contradicted Attorney General Ramsey Clark. . . . A Justice Department spokesman said that Mr. Clark's statement last March second was in error." Now, the Attorney General's attempt to whitewash Shaw via the FBI, as you pointed out, was made immediately after our office arrested him, and it really constituted the first salvo of the propaganda barrage laid down against

us. The natural reaction of many people across the country to Clark's statement, which was carried prominently on TV and in the press, was, "Well, if the FBI cleared him, there can't be anything to this whole conspiracy business." Most defendants have to wait for trial before they're allowed to produce character witnesses. When, three months later, the Justice Department finally admitted Clark was "in error," the story appeared in only a few newspapers and wasn't picked up by the radio or TV networks. But what was even more significant about the Justice Department's attempt to bail out Shaw was the fact that the day after Clark's statement, *The New York Times'* Washington correspondent, Robert B. Semple, Jr., reported that he had been told by an unnamed Justice Department spokesman that his agency was convinced "that Mr. Bertrand and Mr. Shaw were the same man"—and *that* was the reason Clark released his untrue story about the FBI's having cleared Shaw! In other words, knowing that our case was



"Marcia, you could have just said no instead of telling me this was the door to the underworld."

PLAYBOY

based on fact, the Justice Department deliberately dragged a red herring across the trail.

PLAYBOY: Are you free to discuss Oswald's role in the conspiracy?

GARRISON: Yes, but before you can understand Oswald's role in the plot, you've got to jettison the image of him as a "self-proclaimed Marxist" that the mass media inculcated in the public consciousness after his arrest on November 22nd. Oswald's professed Marxist sympathies were just a cover for his real activities. I don't believe there are any serious students of the assassination who don't recognize that Oswald's actual political orientation was extreme right wing. His associates in Dallas and New Orleans—apart from his CIA contacts—were exclusively right wing, some covert, others overt; in fact, our office has positively identified a number of his associates as neo-Nazis. Oswald would have been more at home with *Mein Kampf* than *Das Kapital*.

PLAYBOY: If Oswald wasn't a leftist, what motivation would he have had for shooting at another right-winger, Major Gen-

eral Edwin Walker, eight months before the assassination?

GARRISON: If he did it, his motive—which is to say the motive of those behind him—was a simple one: to ensure that after the assassination, people would ask this very question and assume that because Oswald had shot at General Walker, he must have been a left-winger. It was just another part of Oswald's cover; if you defect to Russia, pass out pro-Castro leaflets on street corners and take a pot shot at General Walker, who on earth would doubt you're a Communist? Of course, if you really look deeply into this incident, there is no real proof that Oswald was the man who did it; the whole charge rests on the unsupported testimony of Marina Oswald, after she had been threatened with deportation if she didn't "cooperate." It makes little difference, though, whether this incident was prepared in advance to create a cover for Oswald or fabricated after the assassination to strengthen his public image as a Marxist. But we've gotten ahead of ourselves. Let's backtrack a bit to fill in the background of Oswald's involvement

in the conspiracy. After "defecting" to Russia, where he served as an agent for the CIA—perhaps this is where his knowledge about the U-2 becomes relevant—he returned to this country in June 1962, lived in Fort Worth and Dallas until April 1963, and then went to New Orleans, where he resumed his friendship with David Ferrie, whom he had met several years before when he belonged to a Civil Air Patrol unit led by Ferrie. We have evidence that Oswald maintained his CIA contacts throughout this period and that Ferrie was also employed by the CIA. In this regard, we will present in court a witness—formerly a CIA courier—who met both Ferrie and Oswald officially in their CIA connection. Parenthetically, Ferrie gave his name as Ferris to this witness—a name recorded without further explanation in Jack Ruby's address book. In 1963, Ferrie and Oswald worked together closely. They were two of the organizers of the group of anti-Castro exiles and Minutemen who trained north of Lake Pontchartrain for a foray into Cuba to assassinate Castro—the venture that changed direction in the summer of 1963 and chose John Kennedy as its new victim. Toward this end—for reasons that will become clear—it became Oswald's role to establish his public identity as a Marxist. It appears that it was with this plan in mind that Oswald was sent to Mexico City in order to get a visa for travel to Cuba, where he planned to solidify his Marxist image, perhaps by making himself conspicuous with a few incendiary anti-Kennedy speeches, and then return to Dallas in time for the assassination. However, this end of the plot was frustrated because the Soviet and Cuban intelligence services apparently had Oswald pegged as an intelligence agent, and he was refused visas at both embassies. Another way in which Oswald tried to establish his procommunism was by setting up a letterhead Fair Play for Cuba Committee—of which he was the only member—and distributing on street corners leaflets praising Castro. He made two blunders here, however. First, one of the men helping him hand out leaflets was a fanatic anti-Castro Cuban exile whom we've subsequently identified from TV footage of a street incident. Second, Oswald "blew his cover" by using the wrong address for his phony New Orleans Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

PLAYBOY: Will you elaborate on this second point?

GARRISON: Yes, because this incident ties together some of the strands of the spider's web. At the time Oswald started his so-called Fair Play for Cuba Committee, two men—Hugh Ward and Guy Ban-



"He works much too hard, the dear. I'd feel so much better if he insisted on doing nothing."

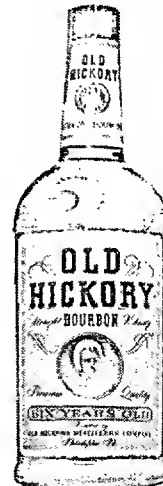
agency at 544 Camp Street in New Orleans. There are some intriguing aspects to their operation. For one thing, Guy Bannister was one of the most militant right-wing anti-Communists in New Orleans. He was a former FBI official and his headquarters at 544 Camp Street was a clearinghouse for Cuban exile and paramilitary right-wing activities. Specifically, he allowed his office to be used as a mail drop for the anti-Castro Cuban Democratic Revolutionary Front; police intelligence records at the time reported that this group was "legitimate in nature and presumably had the unofficial sanction of the Central Intelligence Agency." It did. Bannister also published a newsletter for his clients that included virulent anti-Kennedy polemics. My office also has evidence that Bannister had intimate ties with the Office of Naval Intelligence and the CIA. Both Bannister and Ward were deeply involved in covert anti-Castro exile activities in New Orleans. Bannister in particular seemed to have had an almost messianic drive to fight communism in every country in Latin America; and he was naturally of value to Cuban exiles because of his intimate connections with American intelligence agencies. In the *Ramparts* article you mentioned earlier, ex-FBI agent Bill Turner revealed that both Bannister and Ward were listed in secret Minutemen files as members of the Minutemen and operatives of a group called the Anti-Communism League of the Caribbean, which was allegedly used by the CIA in the overthrow of the Guatemalan government in 1954. So, in other words, these are the last guys in the world you'd expect to find tied up with left-wing or pro-Castro activities. Right? And yet, when Lee Harvey Oswald set up his fictitious branch of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in New Orleans, he distributed leaflets giving the committee's address as 544 Camp Street—Guy Bannister's office! Somebody must have pointed out to Oswald shortly afterward that he was endangering his cover by using this address, because he subsequently changed it to 4907 Magazine Street. But it's certainly significant that at the inception of his public role as a pro-Castro activist, Oswald was utilizing the mailbox of the most militantly conservative and anti-Communist outfit in the city. I might add that we have several witnesses who will testify in court that they saw Oswald hanging out at 544 Camp Street. I want to stress, however, that I have no evidence that Bannister and Ward were involved in the plot to kill Kennedy. Their office was a kind of station for anti-Castro and right-wing extremists passing through New Orleans, and it's perfectly possible that they were completely unaware of the conspiracy being hatched by men like Ferrie and Oswald.

PLAYBOY: Were any of the other figures

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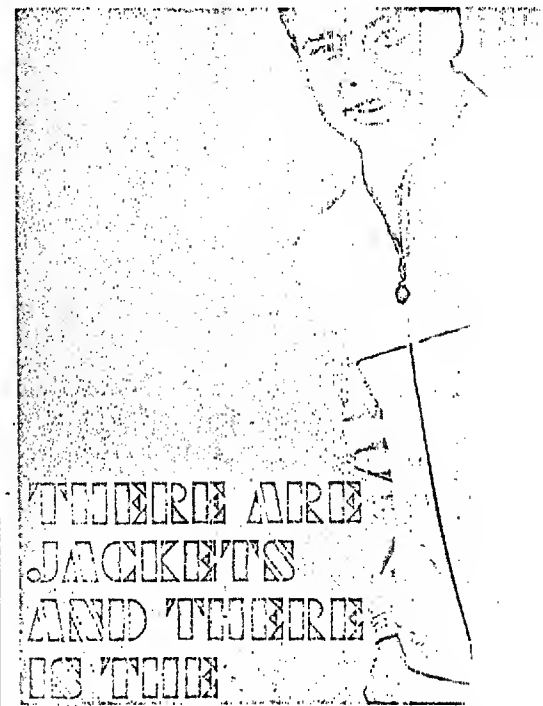
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agency at 544 Camp Street in downtown New Orleans. There are some intriguing aspects to their operation. For one thing, Guy Bannister was one of the most militant right-wing anti-Communists in New Orleans. He was a former FBI official and his headquarters at 544 Camp Street was a clearinghouse for Cuban exile and paramilitary right-wing activities. Specifically, he allowed his office to be used as a mail drop for the anti-Castro Cuban Democratic Revolutionary Front; police intelligence records at the time reported that this group was "legitimate in nature and presumably had the unofficial sanction of the Central Intelligence Agency." It did. Bannister also published a newsletter for his clients that included virulent anti-Kennedy polemics. My office also has evidence that Bannister had intimate ties with the Office of Naval Intelligence and the CIA. Both Bannister and Ward were deeply involved in covert anti-Castro exile activities in New Orleans. Bannister in particular seemed to have had an almost messianic drive to fight communism in every country in Latin America; and he was naturally of value to Cuban exiles because of his intimate connections with American intelligence agencies. In the *Ramparts* article you mentioned earlier, ex-FBI agent Bill Turner revealed that both Bannister and Ward were listed in secret Minutemen files as members of the Minutemen and operatives of a group called the Anti-Communism League of the Caribbean, which was allegedly used by the CIA in the overthrow of the Guatemalan government in 1954. So, in other words, these are the last guys in the world you'd expect to find tied up with left-wing or pro-Castro activities. Right? And yet, when Lee Harvey Oswald set up his fictitious branch of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in New Orleans, he distributed leaflets giving the committee's address as 544 Camp Street—Guy Bannister's office! Somebody must have pointed out to Oswald shortly afterward that he was endangering his cover by using this address, because he subsequently changed it to 4907 Magazine Street. But it's certainly significant that at the inception of his public role as a pro-Castro activist, Oswald was utilizing the mailbox of the most militantly conservative and anti-Communist outfit in the city. I might add that we have several witnesses who will testify in court that they saw Oswald hanging out at 544 Camp Street. I want to stress, however, that I have no evidence that Bannister and Ward were involved in the plot to kill Kennedy. Their office was a kind of way station for anti-Castro and right-wing extremists passing through New Orleans, and it's perfectly possible that they were completely unaware of the conspiracy being hatched by men like Ferrie and Oswald.

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in the alleged conspiracy connected with Bannister?

GARRISON: Yes, David Ferrie was a paid investigator for Bannister, and the two men knew each other very well. During 1962 and 1963, Ferrie spent a good deal of time at 544 Camp Street and he made a series of mysterious long-distance phone calls to Central America from Bannister's office. We have a record of those calls.

PLAYBOY: Where are Bannister and Ward now?

GARRISON: Both have died since the assassination—Bannister of a heart attack in 1964 and Ward when the plane he was piloting for New Orleans Mayor De Lesseps Morrison crashed in Mexico in 1964. De Lesseps Morrison, as it happened, had introduced Clay Shaw to President Kennedy on an airplane flight in 1963.

PLAYBOY: Do you believe there was anything sinister about the crash that killed both Morrison and Ward?

GARRISON: I have no reason to believe

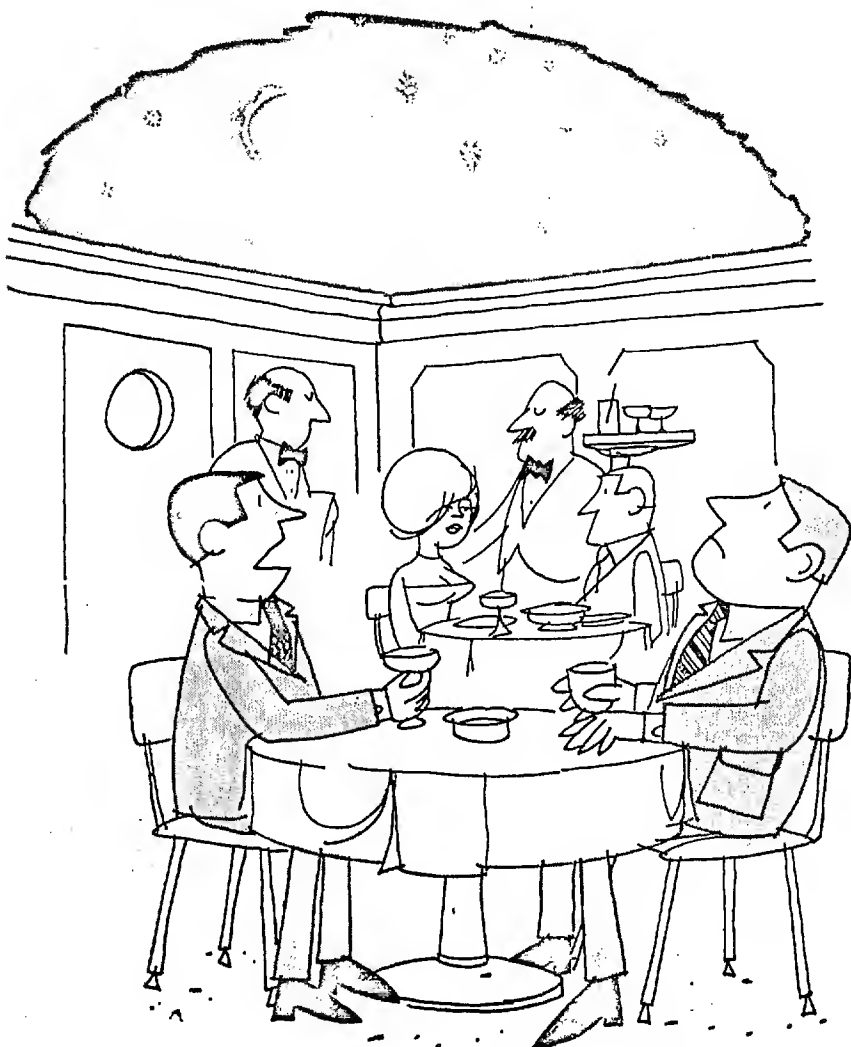
there was anything sinister about the crash, though rumors always spring up in a case like this. The only thing I will say is that witnesses in this case do have a habit of dying at the most inconvenient times. I understand a London insurance firm has prepared an actuarial chart on the likelihood of 20 of the people involved in this case dying within three years of the assassination—and found the odds 30 trillion to one. But I'm sure NBC will shortly discover that one of my investigators bribed the computer. **PLAYBOY:** Was Oswald involved with paramilitary activists and anti-Castro Cuban exiles in Dallas, as well as in New Orleans?

GARRISON: Oh, God, yes. In fact, many of his New Orleans contacts overlap with those in Dallas. Jack Ruby, who played a key role in smuggling guns to the anti-Castro underground—on behalf of the CIA—was one of Oswald's contacts in Dallas. Furthermore, Oswald was virtually surrounded by White Russians in Dallas, some of whom were CIA employees.

Moreover, some of Oswald's anti-Castro friends from Miami and New Orleans showed up in Dallas in October of 1963. In a "Supplementary Investigation Report" filed on November 23, 1963, by Dallas policeman Buddy Walthers, an aide to Sheriff Bill Decker, Walthers stated: "I talked to Sorrels, the head of the Dallas Secret Service. I was advised that for the past few months at a house at 3128 Harlandale, some Cubans had been having meetings on the weekends and were possibly connected with the Freedom for Cuba Party of which Oswald was a member." No attention was paid to Walthers' report, and on November 26th, he complained: "I don't know what action the Secret Service has taken, but I learned today that some time between seven days before the President was shot and the day after he was shot, these Cubans moved from this house. My informant stated that subject Oswald had been to this house before." This was the last that was ever heard of the mysterious Cubans at 3128 Harlandale. A significant point in Walthers' report is his mention of the Freedom for Cuba Party. This appears to be a corruption of the anti-Castro Free Cuba Committee of which Oswald, Ferrie and a small cadre of neo-Nazis—including the man we believe was the "second Oswald"—were members. You may remember that on the night of the assassination, Dallas D.A. Henry Wade called a press conference and at one point referred to Oswald as a member of the "Free Cuba Committee" instead of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. Jack Ruby, who just happened to be there, promptly chimed in to correct him. Ruby was obviously in the jail that night on a dry run prior to his successful murder of Oswald on Sunday—a possibility the Warren Commission never bothered to consider—and could hardly have been eager to draw attention to himself. However, he must have been afraid that if the press reported Oswald was a member of the "Free Cuba Committee," somebody might begin an investigation of that group and discover its anti-Castro and ultra-right-wing orientation. And so he risked his cover to set the record straight and protect his fellow conspirators.

PLAYBOY: In regard to Oswald's role in the conspiracy, you have said that "he was a decoy at first and then he was a patsy and then he was a victim." Would you explain what you meant by that?

GARRISON: Oswald's role in the proposed assassination of Kennedy, as far as he seems to have known, was strictly political: not to fire a gun but—for reasons that may not have been explained to him by his superiors at their planning sessions—to establish his left-wing *bona fides* so unshakably that after the assassination, quite possibly unbeknownst to him, the President's murder would appear



COCHRAN

"Well, all the sign said was, 'Joe's Topless Restaurant.'"

to be the work of a sharpshooting left-wing fanatic and thus allow the other plotters, including the men who actually shot Kennedy, to escape police attention and flee Dallas. Though he may not have known why he was instructed to do so, this was undoubtedly why he got the job at the Texas School Book Depository Building; we've learned that one of the members of the conspiracy was in a position to learn from perfectly innocent Dallas business contacts the route of the Presidential motorcade more than a month before Kennedy's visit. The conspirators—more than probably not including Oswald—knew this would place him on the scene and convince the world that a demented Marxist was the real assassin.

PLAYBOY: Even if Oswald was unaware of his role as a decoy, didn't he suspect that he might be double-crossed by his co-conspirators?

GARRISON: We have uncovered substantial evidence that he was influenced and manipulated rather easily by his older and more sophisticated superiors in the conspiracy, and it's probable that he trusted them more than he distrusted them. But even if the opposite were true, I think he would have done what he was told.

PLAYBOY: Even if he suspected that he might be arrested and convicted as the President's assassin?

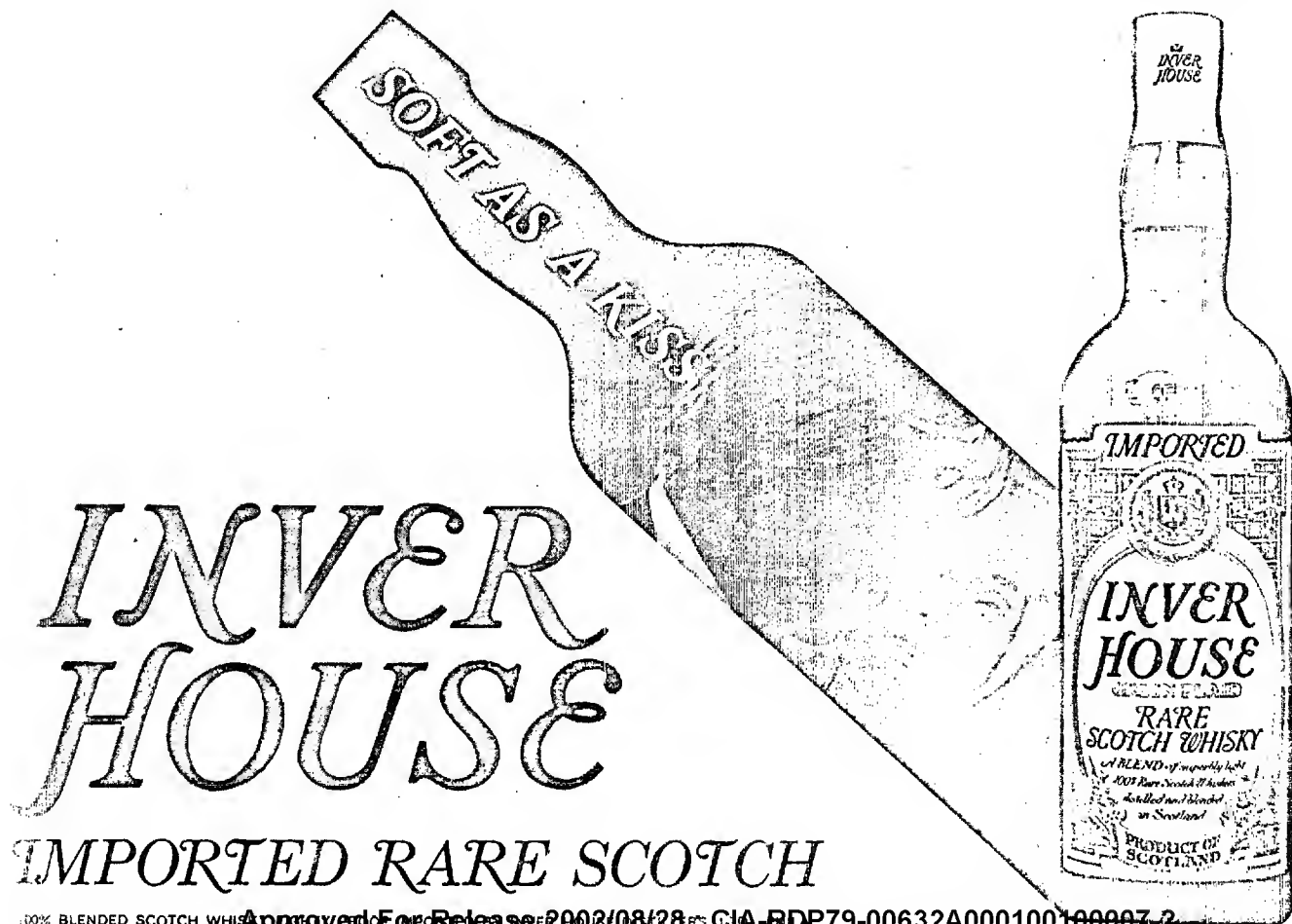
GARRISON: As I said, I don't think it's

likely that he was aware of his role as a decoy. But even if he was, it's probable that he would have been given some cock-and-bull assurances about being richly rewarded and smuggled out of the country after Kennedy's death. But it's even more probable, in my opinion—if he did know the true nature of his role—that he wouldn't have felt the necessity to escape. He would have known that no jury in the world—even in Dallas—would have been able to find him guilty of the assassination on the strength of such transparently contrived circumstantial evidence.

PLAYBOY: That's debatable. But even if Oswald had been brought to trial for and acquitted of the assassination, what reason would he have had to believe that he would also be exonerated of involvement in the conspiracy—which you've admitted yourself?

GARRISON: I don't want to evade your question, but I can't answer it without compromising my investigation of a crucial new area of the conspiracy. I'm afraid I can't discuss it until we've built a solid case. I can say, however, that whatever his knowledge of his role as a decoy, he definitely didn't know about his role as a patsy until after the assassination. At 12:45 p.m. on November 22nd, the Dallas police had broadcast a wanted bulletin for Oswald—over a half hour before Tippit was shot and at a time

when there was absolutely no evidence linking Oswald to the assassination. The Dallas police have never been able to explain who transmitted this wanted notice or on what evidence it was based; and the Warren Commission brushed aside the whole matter as unimportant. I think it's obvious that the conspirators tipped off the police, probably anonymously, in the hope—subsequently realized—that all attention would henceforth be focused on Oswald and the heat would be taken off other members of the plot. We have evidence that the plan was to have him shot as a cop killer in the Texas Theater "while resisting arrest." I can't go into all the details on this, but the murder of Tippit, which I am convinced Oswald didn't commit, was clearly designed to set the stage for Oswald's liquidation in the Texas Theater after another anonymous tip-off. But here the plotters miscalculated, and Oswald was not shot to death but was merely roughed up and rushed off to the Dallas jail—where, you may remember, he shouted to reporters as the police dragged him through the corridors on November 22nd: "I didn't kill anyone—I'm being made a patsy." The conspiracy had gone seriously awry and the plotters were in danger of exposure by Oswald. Enter Jack Ruby—and exit Oswald. So first Oswald was a decoy, next a patsy and finally—in the basement of the Dallas jail



on November 24, 1963—a victim.

PLAYBOY: Even if Oswald was a scapegoat in the alleged conspiracy, why do you believe he couldn't also have been one of those who shot at the President?

GARRISON: If there's one thing the Warren Commission and its 26 volumes of supportive evidence demonstrate conclusively, it's that Lee Harvey Oswald did *not* shoot John Kennedy on November 22, 1963. Of course, the Commission concluded not only that Oswald fired at the President but that he was a marksman, that he had enough time to "fire three shots, with two hits, within 4.8 and 5.6 seconds," that his Mannlicher-Carcano was an accurate rifle, etc.—but all these conclusions are actually in direct contradiction of the evidence within the Commission's own 26 volumes. By culling and coordinating that evidence, the leading critics of the Commission have proved that Oswald was a mediocre shot; that the Mannlicher-Carcano rifle he allegedly used was about the crummiest weapon on the market today; that its telescopic sight was loose and had to be realigned before Commission experts could fire it; that the 20-year-old ammunition he would have had to use could not have been relied on to fire accurately, if at all; that the rifle quite possibly was taken from Oswald's home after the assassination and planted in the Depository; that the Commission's own chronology of Oswald's movements made it highly implausible for him to fire three shots, wipe the rifle clear of fingerprints—there were none found on it—hide the rifle under a stack of books and rush down four flights of stairs to the second floor, all in the few seconds it took Roy Truly and Officer Marrion Baker to rush in from the street after the shots and encounter Oswald standing beside the vending machine in the employees' cafeteria. I could cite additional evidence proving that Oswald didn't fire a rifle from the sixth floor of the Depository, but it would just be a recapitulation of the excellent books of the critics, to which I refer your readers. There are a number of factors that we've examined independently during the course of our investigation that also prove Oswald didn't shoot at the President. For one thing, the nitrate test administered to Oswald on the day of the assassination clearly exonerated him of having fired a rifle within the past 24 hours. He had nitrates on both hands, but *no* nitrates on his cheek—which means it was impossible for him to have fired a rifle. The fact that he had nitrates on both hands is regarded in the nitrate test as a sign of innocence; it's the same as having nitrates on neither hand. This is because so many ordinary objects leave traces of nitrate on the hands. You're smoking a cigar, for example—tobacco contains nitrate; so if you were tested right now, you'd have nitrate on your

right hand but not on your left. I'm smoking a pipe, which I interchange between my hands, so I'll have traces of nitrate on both hands but not on my cheeks. The morning of the assassination, Oswald was moving crates in a newly painted room, which was likely to have left traces of nitrate on both his hands. Now, of course, if the nitrate test had proved positive, and Oswald did have nitrate on one hand and on his cheek, that would still not constitute proof positive that he'd fired a gun, because the nitrates could have been left by a substance other than gunpowder. But the fact that he had no nitrate whatsoever on his cheek is ineluctable proof that he never fired a rifle that day. If he had washed his face to remove the nitrate before the test was administered, there would have been none on his hands either—unless he was in the habit of washing with gloves on. This was a sticky problem for the Warren Commission, but they resolved it with their customary aplomb. An expert was dug up who testified that in a Mannlicher-Carcano rifle, the chamber is so tight that no nitrates are emitted upon firing; and the Commission used this testimony to dismiss the whole subject. However, the *inventor* of the nitrate test subsequently tested the Mannlicher-Carcano and found that it *did* leave nitrate traces. He was not called to testify by the Warren Commission. So the nitrate test alone is incontrovertible proof that Oswald did not fire a rifle on November 22nd. We've also found some new evidence that shows that Oswald's Mannlicher-Carcano was not the only weapon discovered in the Depository Building after the assassination. I recently traveled to New York for a conference with Richard Sprague, a brilliant man who's been independently researching technical aspects of the assassination, and he showed me a hitherto unpublished collection of film clips from a motion picture taken of the assassination and its aftermath. Part of the film, shot shortly after one p.m., shows the Dallas police carrying the assassination weapon out of the Book Depository. They stop for the photographers and an officer holds the rifle up above his head so that the inquisitive crowd can look at it. There's just one little flaw here: This rifle does *not* have a telescopic sight, and thus cannot be Oswald's rifle. This weapon was taken from the building approximately 20 minutes *before* Oswald's Mannlicher-Carcano was "discovered"—or planted—on the premises. To sum up: Oswald was involved in the conspiracy; shots were fired at Kennedy from the Depository but also from the grassy knoll and apparently from the Dal-Tex Building as well—but not one of them was fired by Lee Harvey Oswald, and not one of them from his Mannlicher-Carcano.

PLAYBOY: If Oswald didn't shoot President Kennedy from the sixth-floor win-

dow of the Book Depository, who did? **GARRISON:** Our office has developed evidence that the President was assassinated by a precision guerrilla team of at least seven men, including anti-Castro adventurers and members of the paramilitary right. Of course, the Ministry of Truth concluded—by scrupulously ignoring the most compelling evidence and carefully selecting only those facts that conformed to its preconceived thesis of a lone assassin—that "no credible evidence suggests that the shots were fired from . . . any place other than the Texas School Book Depository Building." But anyone who takes the time to read the Warren Report will find that of the witnesses in Dealey Plaza who were able to assess the origin of the shots, almost two thirds said they came from the grassy-knoll area in front and to the right of the Presidential limousine and not from the Book Depository, which was to the rear of the President. A number of reliable witnesses testified that they heard shots ring out from behind the picket fence and saw a puff of smoke drift into the air. Additional evidence supporting this can be found in the Zapruder film published in *Life*, which reveals that the President was slammed *backward* by the impact of a bullet; unless you abrogate Newton's third law of motion, this means the President was shot from the front. Also—though they were contradicted later—several of the doctors at Parkland Hospital who examined the President's neck wound contended it was an *entrance* wound, which would certainly tend to indicate that Kennedy was shot from the front. In the course of our investigation, we've uncovered additional evidence establishing absolutely that there were at least four men on the grassy knoll, at least two behind the picket fence and two or more behind a small stone wall to the right of the fence. As I reconstruct it from the still-incomplete evidence in our possession, one man fired at the President from each location, while the role of his companion was to snatch up the cartridges as they were ejected. Parenthetically, a book on firearms characteristics was found in Ferrie's apartment. It was filled with underlining and marginal notations, and the most heavily annotated section was one describing the direction and distance a cartridge travels from a rifle after ejection. Scribbled on a bookmark in this section, in Ferrie's handwriting, were the figures, not mentioned in the text, "50° and 11 feet"—which indicates the possibility that Ferrie had test-fired a rifle and plotted the distance from the gunman to where the ejected cartridges would fall. But to return to the scene of the crime, it seems virtually certain that the cartridges, along with the rifles, were then thrown into the trunk of a car—parked directly behind the picket fence—which was driven from the scene some hours after the assassination. If there had been a thorough search

PLAYBOY

of all vehicles in the vicinity of the grassy knoll immediately after the assassination, this incriminating evidence might have been uncovered—along with the real authors of the President's murder. In addition to the assassins on the grassy knoll, at least two other men fired from behind the President, one from the Book Depository Building—not Oswald—and one, in all probability, from the Dal-Tex Building. As it happens, a man was arrested right after the assassination as he left the Dal-Tex Building and was taken away in a patrol car, but like the three other men detained after the assassination—one in the railroad yard behind the grassy knoll, one on the railroad overpass farther down the parade route, and one in front of the Book Depository Building—he then dropped out of sight completely. All of these suspects taken into custody after the assassination remain as anonymous as if they'd been detained for throwing a candy wrapper on the sidewalk. We have also located another man—in green combat fatigues—

who was not involved in the shooting but created a diversionary action in order to distract people's attention from the snipers. This individual screamed, fell to the ground and simulated an epileptic fit, drawing people away from the vicinity of the knoll just before the President's motorcade reached the ambush point. So you have at least seven people involved, with four firing at the President and catching him in a crossfire—just as the assassin had planned at the meeting in David Ferrie's apartment in September. It was a precision operation and was carried out coolly and with excellent coordination; the assassins even kept in contact by radio. The President, of course, had no chance. It was an overkill operation. As far as the actual sequence of shots goes, you'll remember that the Warren Commission concluded that only three bullets were fired at the President—one that hit just below the back of his neck, exited through his throat and then passed through Governor Connally's body; one that missed; and one that blew off a por-

tion of the President's skull and killed him. Like most of the other conclusions of the Commission, this one contradicts both the evidence and the testimony of eyewitnesses. The initial shot hit the President in the front of the neck, as the Parkland Hospital doctors recognized—though they were later contradicted by the military physicians at the Bethesda autopsy, and by the Warren Report. The second shot struck the President in the back; the location of this wound can be verified not by consulting the official autopsy report—on which the Commission based its conclusion that this bullet hit Kennedy in the back of the neck and exited from his throat—but by perusing the reports filed by two FBI agents who were present at the President's autopsy in Bethesda, Maryland. Both stated unequivocally that the bullet in question entered President Kennedy's back and did not continue through his body. I also refer you to a photograph of the President's shirt taken by the FBI, and to a drawing of the President's back wound made by one of the examining physicians at Bethesda; the location of the wound in both cases corresponds exactly—more than three inches below the President's neck. Yet the Commission concluded that this wound occurred in his neck. This, of course, was to make it more believable that the same bullet had exited from the President's throat and slanted on down through Governor Connally. Even if this bullet had entered where the Commission claims and then exited from the President's throat, it would have been possible for it to enter Governor Connally's upper back at a downward angle, exit from his lower chest and lodge finally in his thigh—fired, as the Commission says it was, from the elevation of the sixth-floor window of the Book Depository—only if Connally had been sitting in the President's lap or if the bullet had described two 90-degree turns on its way from President Kennedy's throat to Governor Connally's back. Clearly, the President's throat wound was caused by the first shot, this one from the grassy knoll in front of the limousine; and his back wound came from the rear. I've already given you my reasons for reaching this conclusion.

PLAYBOY: If the first bullet was fired from the front, why wasn't it found in the President's body, or somewhere in the Presidential limousine?

GARRISON: The exact nature of the President's wounds, as well as the disposition of the bullets or bullet fragments, are among the many concealed items in this case. I told you earlier about the men on the grassy knoll whose sole function we believe was to catch the cartridges as they were ejected from the assassins' rifles. We also have reason to suspect that other members of the conspiracy may have been assigned the job of removing other evidence—such as traceable bullet fragments



"Timmy has to tinkle."

—that might betray the assassins. In the chaos of November 22nd, this would not have been as difficult as it sounds. We know that a bullet, designated Exhibit number 399 by the Warren Commission, was planted on a stretcher in Parkland Hospital to incriminate Oswald. The Commission concluded that this bullet allegedly hit both Kennedy and Governor Connally, causing seven wounds and breaking three bones—and emerged without a dent! In subsequent ballistics tests with the same gun, every bullet was squashed completely out of shape from impact with various simulated human targets. So, if the conspirators could fabricate a bullet, they could easily conceal one. But to return to the sequence of shots: Governor Connally was struck by a third bullet—as he himself insisted, not the one that struck Kennedy in the back—also fired from the rear. A fourth shot missed the Presidential limousine completely and struck the curb along the south side of Main Street, disintegrating into fragments; the trajectory of this bullet has been plotted backward to a point of origin in the Dal-Tex Building. The fifth shot, which struck the President in the right temple, tore off the top of his skull and snapped him back into his seat—a point overlooked by the Warren Commission—had to have been fired from the grassy knoll. There is also medical evidence indicating the likelihood that an additional head shot may have been fired. The report of Dr. Robert McClelland at Parkland Hospital, for example, states that "the cause of death was due to massive head and brain injury from a gunshot wound of the left temple." And yet another shot may also have been fired; frames 208 to 211 of the Zapruder film, which were deleted from the Warren Report—presumably as irrelevant—reveal signs of stress appearing suddenly on the back of a street sign momentarily obstructing the view between the grassy knoll and the President's car. These stress signs may very well have been caused by the impact of a stray bullet on the sign. We'll never be sure about this, however, because the day after the assassination, the sign was removed and no one in Dallas seems to know what became of it. Some of the gunmen appear to have used frangible bullets, a variant of the dum dum bullet that is forbidden by the Geneva Treaty. Frangible bullets explode on impact into tiny fragments, as did the bullet that caused the fatal wound in the President's head. Of course, frangible bullets are ideal in a political assassination, because they almost guarantee massive damage and assure that no tangible evidence will remain that ballistics experts could use to trace the murder weapon. I might also mention that frangible bullets *cannot* be fired from a Mannlicher-Carcano, such as the Commission finally

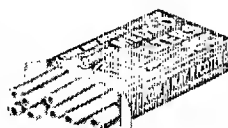
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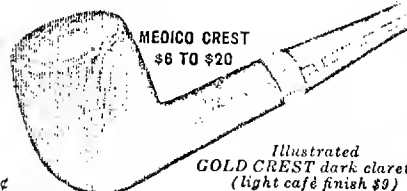
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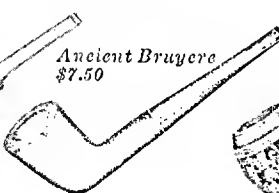
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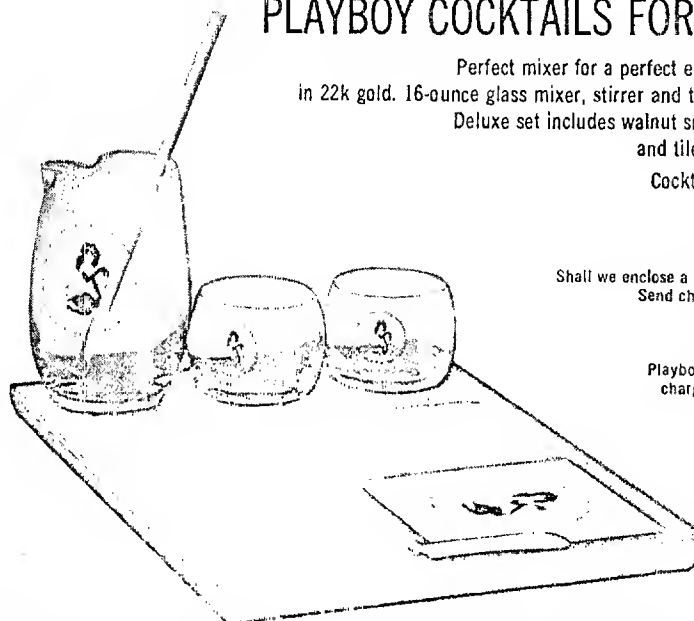
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Oswald used to kill the President. Also parenthetically, this type of bullet was issued by the CIA for use in anti-Castro-exile raids on Cuba. In summation, there were at least five or six shots fired at the President from front and rear by at least four gunmen, assisted by several accomplices, two of whom probably picked up the cartridges and one of whom created a diversion to draw people's eyes away from the grassy knoll. At this stage of events, Lee Harvey Oswald was no more than a spectator to the assassination—perhaps in a very literal sense. As the first shot rang out, Associated Press photographer James Algens snapped a picture of the motorcade that shows a man with a remarkable resemblance to Lee Harvey Oswald—same hairline, same face shape—standing in the doorway of the Book Depository Building. Somehow or other, the Warren Commission concluded that this man was actually Billy Nolan Lovelady, an employee of the Depository, who looked very little like Oswald. Furthermore, on the day of the assassination, Oswald was wearing a white T-shirt under a long-sleeved dark shirt opened halfway to his waist—the same outfit worn by the man in the doorway—but Lovelady said that on November 22nd he was wearing a *short-sleeved, red-and-white-striped sport shirt* buttoned near the neck. The Algens photograph indicates the very real possibility that at the moment Oswald was supposed to have been crouching in the sixth-floor window of the Depository shooting Kennedy, he may actually have been standing outside the front door watching the Presidential motorcade.

PLAYBOY: Between June 25th and 29th, CBS telecast a series of four special shows revealing the findings of the network's own seven-month investigation of the assassination. CBS agreed with the Warren Commission's conclusion that Oswald was the assassin, that he acted alone and that only three shots were fired; but it theorized that the first shot was fired earlier than the Warren Commission believed, thus giving Oswald sufficient time to fire three well-aimed shots at the President with his Mannlicher-Carcano—and overcoming the implausibility of the Commission's conclusion that he had scored two hits out of three shots in only 5.6 seconds. Don't you consider this a logical explanation of the discrepancies in the Commission's time sequence?

GARRISON: I'm afraid it's neither logical nor an explanation. In case your readers aren't familiar with all the ramifications of this question, the Commission's entire lone-assassin theory rests on the fact that all three shots were fired, as you point out, within a period of 5.6 seconds. Now, the film taken of the assassination by Abraham Zapruder proves that a maximum of 1.8 seconds elapsed between the time Kennedy was fired and Governor

From their own reactions—but it requires 2.3 seconds just to work the bolt on a Mannlicher-Carcano rifle. To escape this dilemma, the Commission produced the magical bullet, Exhibit 399, which I referred to earlier. Apart from the pristine condition of 399, the whole time sequence was the weakest link in the Commission's shaky chain of evidence, and CBS seems to have taken it upon its shoulders to resolve the problem by inventing a new time sequence. What they did was to have a photo analyst, Charles Wyckoff, examine the Zapruder film and find that certain frames were blurred. Wyckoff arbitrarily decided that these blurs were caused by Zapruder's physical reaction to the sound of shots ringing out—although by the same logic, Zapruder could just have sneezed. Now, the Warren Commission had concluded that Kennedy would not have been visible to Oswald until Frame 210 of the Zapruder film; until then, he was obscured by an oak tree—and was first hit in Frame 222 or 223. But Wyckoff detected a blur in the vicinity of Frame 186; and on the basis of this, CBS speculated that Zapruder heard a shot at Frame 186—the first shot in CBS' revised time schedule—which Oswald allegedly fired at Kennedy *through the branches of the oak tree*. CBS even speculated that the bullet lodged in the trunk of the oak tree, and sent a team of men with metal detectors scurrying up it, but to no avail; the commentator explained that maybe someday more sophisticated detection devices would be developed and the bullet would be found. Sure. This scenario, of course, gave Oswald several extra seconds in which to take careful aim and fire his subsequent shots—and thus let the Commission off the hook. The only trouble here is that the people who conducted the CBS study—like most defenders of the Warren Report—didn't do all of their homework. They forgot, or chose to ignore, that by the Commission's own admission, the bullet that missed Kennedy—the second bullet in the Commission's sequence—hit the curb on Main Street near the railroad underpass 100 yards ahead of the limousine, shattering into fragments and causing superficial wounds on the face of a bystander, James Tague. But the trajectory of any bullet fired from the sixth floor of the Depository through the branches of the oak tree is such that it could not conceivably hit within a city block of the underpass. So please excuse me if I'm not overwhelmed by the ineluctable logic of CBS' presentation. And just let me add a footnote here: CBS made a great deal out of its assumption that the blurs on Zapruder's film indicated a reflexive reaction to shots ringing out. But they never asked Zapruder about his statement to Secret Service

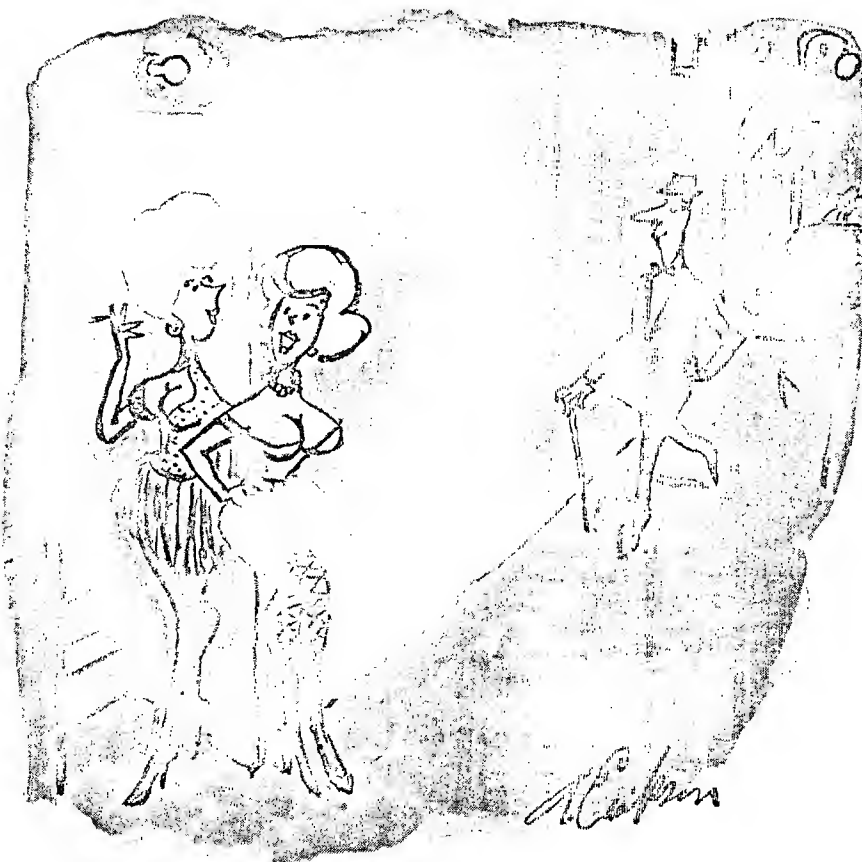
along with the majority of the witnesses to the assassination, he said the shots came from the grassy knoll, on which he was standing—from behind the stone wall, which was only a few dozen feet from him, in the opposite direction from the Depository. Like the Warren Commission, CBS was scrupulously selective in its choice of evidence. Its broadcast wasn't a hatchet job like the NBC show, but it was equally misleading and, however unintentionally, dishonest. I'm not imputing sinister motives to CBS; it appears that its greatest handicap was its own ignorance of the assassination.

PLAYBOY: To return to your own investigation of the assassination: Have you discovered the identity of any of the conspirators you say were involved in the actual shooting?

GARRISON: I don't want to sound coy or evasive, but I'm afraid I can't comment on that. All I can say is that this is an ongoing case and there will be more arrests.

PLAYBOY: Let's move on to the events that followed the assassination. What reason do you have for believing that Oswald didn't shoot Officer Tippit?

GARRISON: As I said earlier, the evidence we've uncovered leads us to suspect that two men, neither of whom was Oswald, were the real murderers of Tippit; we believe we have one of them identified. The critics of the Warren Report have pointed out that a number of the witnesses could not identify Oswald as the slayer, that several said the murderer was short and squat—Oswald was thin and medium height—and another said that two men were involved. The Warren Commission's own chronology of Oswald's movements also fails to allow him sufficient time to reach the scene of Tippit's murder from the Book Depository Building. The clincher, as far as I'm concerned, is that four cartridges were found at the scene of the slaying. Now, revolvers do not eject cartridges, so when someone is shot, you don't later find gratuitous cartridges strewn over the sidewalk—unless the murderer deliberately takes the trouble to eject them. We suspect that cartridges had been previously obtained from Oswald's .38 revolver and left at the murder site by the real killers as part of the setup to incriminate Oswald. However, somebody slipped up there. Of the four cartridges found at the scene, two were Winchesters and two were Remingtons—but of the four bullets found in Officer Tippit's body, three were Winchesters and one was a Remington! The last time I looked, the Remington-Peters Manufacturing Company was not in the habit of slipping Winchester bullets into its cartridges, nor was the Winchester-Western Manufacturing Company putting Remington bullets into its



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of its reports have been classified top secret in the Archives by order of certain officials in the Department of Justice. The trouble I face today is that, after four years, not only are these documents unavailable but the trail has grown cold in many areas. Ruby is dead. Ferrie is dead. Many other witnesses with valuable information have either been murdered or fled the country.

PLAYBOY: You still haven't answered the question: Was Oswald involved with the FBI?

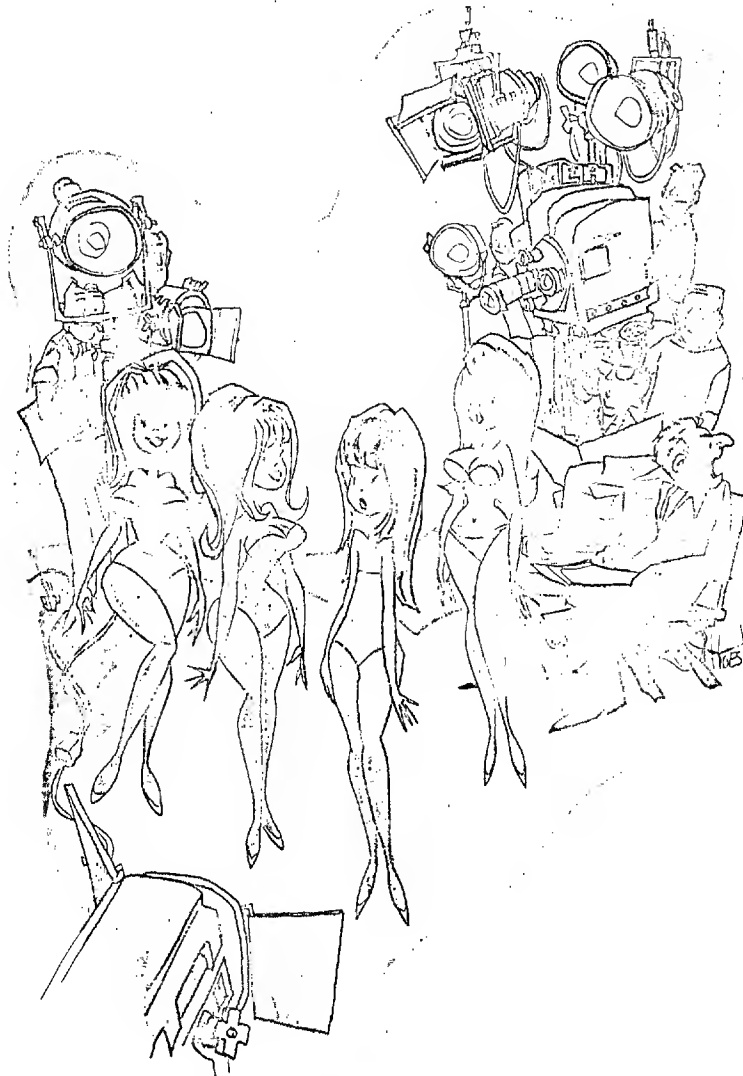
GARRISON: Well, I just wanted to phrase my reply in such a manner that it wouldn't be misconstrued as a broadside against the entire FBI. Oswald may have been a petty informer for the Bureau, receiving small sums of money in return for information about left-wing activities in the Dallas-New Orleans area. But I must stress that there is no indication of any connection between Oswald and the FBI with regard to the assassination, and that his position with the FBI was in no way analogous to his position with the CIA; the FBI retains hundreds, perhaps thousands of such informants across the country and is no more responsible for their over-all pattern of political activity than the Internal Revenue Service is responsible for the behavior of its confidential informants on tax-evasion matters. Oswald's possible ties to the Bureau are never mentioned in the Warren Report, but a member of the Commission, Congressman Gerald Ford, revealed in his otherwise undistinguished book, *Portrait of an Assassin*, that the Commission was informed by Texas Attorney General Waggoner Carr and Dallas D. A. Henry Wade that Oswald had been employed by the FBI as an informant since September of 1962; his salary, they revealed, was \$200 a month and his FBI code number was 179. The Warren Commission acted promptly on this information from two responsible Texas officials: Chief Counsel Rankin told the members of the Commission that "We have a dirty rumor that is very bad for the Commission . . . and it is very damaging to the agencies that are involved in it and it must be wiped out insofar as it is possible to do so by the Commission." The Commission then launched one of its typically thorough investigations: J. Edgar Hoover was asked if the alleged assassin of the President of the United States had been an employee of his; Mr. Hoover said "No"; and the Commission closed the case. If Congressman Ford hadn't developed writer's itch, we would never even have heard of the incident. Once again, the Commission made an unwise choice between tranquility and truth. There is also other evidence linking Oswald to the FBI—though, again, not in any conspiratorial context. A Dallas police investigative report dated April 20, 1963,

describes a police interview with Mrs. Teofil Meller, a White Russian émigrée in Dallas who had befriended Oswald and Marina. Mrs. Meller revealed, according to the report, that "she saw the book *Kapital*, which was written by Karl Marx, during one of these visits at Oswald's house and became very worried about it. Subject [Mr. Meller] said he checked with the FBI and they told him that Oswald was all right." So here you have this "self-proclaimed Marxist," who had defected to the Soviet Union, tried to renounce his American citizenship and was now allegedly active in pro-Castro activities, being given a clean bill of health by the FBI. It's quite possible that this clean bill of health was originally issued by the State Department, which, in reply to an FBI request for information about Oswald's activities in Russia—this was shortly after his "defection"—assured the Bureau that he was a solid citizen. So I don't see anything sinister in all of this, at least as far as the FBI is concerned. The Bureau has to obtain

information on subversion and it's going to get what it needs not from Rhodes scholars and divinity students but from apparently marginal figures like Lee Oswald with an entree into the political underworld.

PLAYBOY: If you see nothing sinister in the FBI's relationship with Oswald, why did you subpoena FBI agents Regis Kennedy and Warren De Bruceys to testify before the New Orleans Parish grand jury?

GARRISON: Regis Kennedy is one of the FBI agents who interrogated David Ferrie in November 1963, and I hoped to learn from him what information the Bureau had elicited from Ferrie. But on the instructions of our old friend Attorney General Ramsey Clark, Kennedy refused to answer the questions put to him by the grand jury on the grounds of executive privilege. Warren De Bruceys is a former FBI agent based in New Orleans who also questioned Ferrie in 1963. Between 1961 and 1963, De Bruceys was involved with anti-Castro exile activities



PLAYBOY

in New Orleans and was seen frequently at meetings of the right-wing Cuban Democratic Revolutionary Front. I'd like to find out the exact nature of De Bruce's relationship with Lee Oswald. As long as Oswald was in New Orleans, so was De Bruce. When Oswald moved to Dallas, De Bruce followed him. After the assassination, De Bruce returned to New Orleans. This may all be coincidence, but I find it interesting that De Bruce refuses to cooperate with our office—significant and frustrating, because I feel he could shed considerable light on Oswald's ties to anti-Castro groups.

PLAYBOY: On March 23, 1967, you ordered the arrest of Gordon Novel as a material witness in the conspiracy to assassinate President Kennedy, and you have subsequently sought his extradition from Ohio. What role do you believe Novel played in the alleged conspiracy?

GARRISON: I can't go into all aspects of Novel's activities, because we have a live case against him. Novel worked closely with David Ferrie and the anti-Castro Cuban exiles. In 1961, he raided a munitions bunker in Houma, Louisiana, with David Ferrie and a prominent anti-Castro exile leader, and the weapons seized were subsequently shipped by CIA agents to the counterrevolutionary underground in Cuba. He also worked for the Evergreen Advertising Agency in New Orleans, a CIA front that alerted anti-Castro agents to the date of the Bay of Pigs invasion by placing coded messages in radio commercials for Christmas trees. Novel himself was a paid employee of the CIA. As I mentioned earlier, Novel's own lawyer, Stephen Plotkin, has admitted that his client is a CIA agent. On May 23, 1967, Plotkin was quoted in the *New Orleans States-Item* as saying that "his client served as an intermediary between the CIA and anti-Castro Cubans in New Orleans and Miami prior to the April 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion." And that same day, the Associated Press, which has hardly served as my press agent in this case, reported: "When Novel first fled from New Orleans, he headed straight for McLean, Virginia, which is the Central Intelligence Agency suburb. This is not surprising, because Gordon Novel was a CIA employee in the early Sixties." There is no doubt that Gordon Novel was a CIA operative.

PLAYBOY: If the CIA, as you charge, not only refuses to cooperate with you but has actively obstructed your investigation, how are you in a position to know about Novel's activities on behalf of the Agency?

GARRISON: The people of Louisiana pay my investigators to investigate. But in this specific instance, we've benefited by sheer luck. After Novel fled the city in March, my investigators and the city police both scoured his apartment for evidence, but Novel appeared to have covered his trail pretty effectively. I'm

afraid, in this case, we weren't as efficient as two young girls who moved into Novel's apartment a few weeks later and, during a thorough house cleaning, found a penciled rough draft of a letter under a strip of linoleum on the kitchen-sink drainboard. One of the girls gave it to her boyfriend, a student at Tulane University, and he in turn passed it on to one of his professors, who subsequently showed the letter to Hoke May, a reporter for the *New Orleans States-Item*. May had the letter examined by an independent handwriting analyst, Gilbert Fortier, who compared it with other samples of Novel's writing and determined that the draft had been written by Novel—a fact that was confirmed by Novel's attorney, who said that "everything in the letter as far as Novel is concerned is actually the truth." This letter makes fascinating reading. It is addressed to a Mr. Weiss, Novel's apparent superior in the CIA. Novel tells Weiss: "I took the liberty of writing you direct and apprising you of current situation expecting you to forward this through appropriate channels. Our connection and activity of that period involved individuals presently about to be indicted as conspirators in Mr. Garrison's investigation." Novel goes on to warn that my probe was in danger of exposing his ties to the Double-Check Corporation in Miami, which the book *The Invisible Government* exposes as a CIA front that recruited pilots and saboteurs for the Bay of Pigs and subsequent anti-Castro adventures. Novel writes in the letter: "Mr. Garrison . . . is unaware of Double-Check's involvement in this matter but has strong suspicions." He also adds that he lied to the FBI: "I have been questioned extensively by local FBI recently as to whether or not I was involved with Double-Check's parent holding corporation. . . . My reply on five queries was negative. Bureau unaware of Double-Check association in this matter." The letter indicates that Novel was growing edgy, because he complains: "We have temporarily avoided one subpoena not to reveal Double-Check activities. . . . We want out of this thing before Thursday, 3/—/67. Our attorneys have been told to expect another subpoena to appear and testify on this matter. The Fifth Amendment and/or immunity and legal tactics will not suffice." In case the CIA decided Novel was expendable, he seems to have taken out a kind of insurance policy: "Our attorneys and others are in possession of complete sealed files containing all information concerning this matter. In the event of our sudden departure, either accidental or otherwise, they are instructed to simultaneously release same for public scrutiny in different areas." Novel concludes his little billet-doux by urging the CIA to take "appropriate counteraction relative to Garrison's inquisition concerning us through military channels, vis-a-vis the DIA man." After

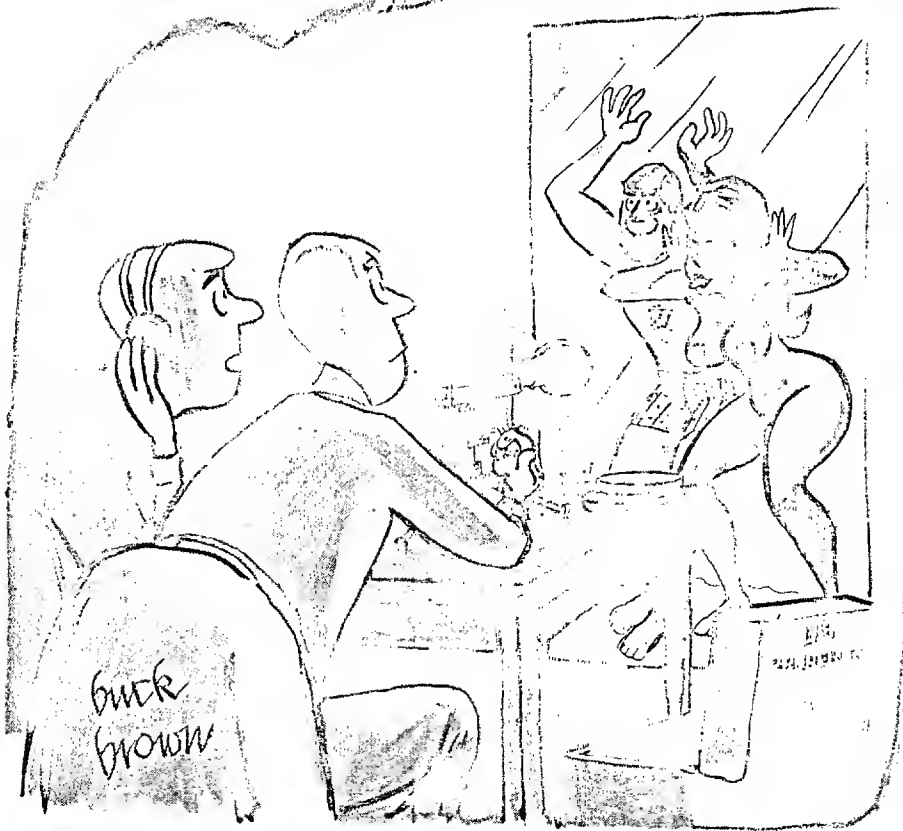
costly enough, the DIA is the abbreviation for the Defense Intelligence Agency, a top-secret group set up after the Bay of Pigs to supervise the CIA and ensure increased Administration control of CIA activities—a task at which it has proved spectacularly unsuccessful.

PLAYBOY: Novel subsequently fled New Orleans and took refuge in Ohio. Why were you unable to obtain his extradition?

GARRISON: The reason we were unable to obtain Novel's extradition from Ohio—the reason we are unable to extradite anyone connected with this case—is that there are powerful forces in Washington who find it imperative to conceal from the American public the truth about the assassination. And as a result, terrific pressure has been brought to bear on the governors of the states involved to prevent them from signing the extradition papers and returning the defendants to stand trial. I'm sorry to say that in every case, these Jell-o-spined governors have caved in and "played the game" Washington's way. To give them the benefit of the doubt, I suppose it's also possible that they just didn't want to aid and abet an investigation that every official effort, overt and covert, has been made to discredit as irresponsible and unfounded. Whatever his motivation, Governor Rhodes of Ohio, to name one, has said that he would allow me to extradite Novel to stand trial on charges arising from the CIA-inspired burglary of the ammunitions bunker in Houma, Louisiana—but that I would not be allowed under the stipulations of the extradition agreement to question him about the assassination! In other words, it's OK for me to send a man to jail on a burglary rap, but I musn't upset him by inquiring if he killed the President. I'm all in favor of protecting a defendant's civil rights, but this is straight out of *Alice in Wonderland*.

PLAYBOY: The *New Orleans States-Item* of June 14, 1967, quoted Novel as saying that if he were granted immunity from the assassination investigation, he would be willing to testify on a number of points, including "international fraud, mysterious intelligence activities from November 1959 to date in the Southern quadrant of the U.S.A. and certain islands off Florida, seditious treason, hot war games and cold munitions transfers, ten 1950-model Canadian surplus Vampire jet supporter fighter aircraft and certain Cuban-Anglo-French sabotage affairs of early 1961." Why did you reject his offer?

GARRISON: These are all intriguing aspects of Novel's career as a U.S. intelligence agent, and I'd love to hear about them especially in knowledge of seditious



"They just don't make two-way mirrors like they used to."

treason—but that isn't the subject of my investigation.

PLAYBOY: Let's move on from Gordon Novel to Jack Ruby, who you claim murdered Oswald to "silence" him. Do you have any evidence that Ruby and Oswald knew each other?

GARRISON: Though Ruby and the Warren Report denied it vehemently, there is simply no question about it. We didn't even have to do a great deal of investigative digging; connections popped up everywhere we scratched the surface.

PLAYBOY: What evidence do you have to support your charge that Ruby was involved in anti-Castro exile activities with Oswald and Ferrie?

GARRISON: We have evidence linking Ruby not only to anti-Castro exile activities but, as with almost everyone else involved in this case, to the CIA itself. Never forget that the CIA maintains a great variety of curious alliances it feels serve its purposes. It may be hard to imagine Ruby in a trench coat, but he seems to have been as good an employee of the CIA as he was a pimp for the Dallas cops. Just let me add parenthetically that I stress the word "employee" here as opposed to "agent." The CIA employs many people in many different capacities, sometimes just on a retainer basis, and these individuals do not fall under the over-all authority of the CIA.

I have solid evidence indicating that Ruby, Ferrie, Oswald and others involved in this case were all paid by the CIA to perform certain functions: Ruby to smuggle arms for Cuban exile groups, Ferrie to train them and to fly counterrevolutionary secret missions to Cuba, and Oswald to establish himself so convincingly as a Marxist that he would win the trust of American left-wing groups and also have freedom to travel as a spy in Communist countries, particularly Cuba. But I have reason to believe that none of them was a salaried agent operating under a direct chain of command. In this particular case—though, as with the others involved, it seems to have been unrelated to his CIA work—Ruby was up to his neck with the plotters. Our investigators have broken a code Oswald used and found Ruby's private unlisted telephone number, as of 1963, written in Oswald's notebook. The same coded number was found in the address book of another prominent figure in this case. We have further evidence linking Ruby to the conspiracy, but it involves testimony to be given in court in the future, so I can't reveal it here. On the broader point of Ruby's involvement with anti-Castro exile activity, there can be no doubt whatsoever. Let me refer you here to the testimony of Nancy Perrin Rich before the Warren Commission. This lady arrived

in Dallas in 1961 with her husband, Robert Perrin, a gun runner and one-time narcotics smuggler and, through police intervention, secured a job as a bartender at Ruby's Carousel Club. She quit soon after and didn't see Ruby again until one night when she and her husband, as she tells it, attended a conference of anti-Castro exiles presided over by a lieutenant colonel—an Army colonel, she thought. She testified that Robert Perrin was offered \$10,000 if he would run guns to the underground in Cuba, and she haggled the sum up to \$25,000. When Perrin demanded a cash retainer, a phone call was made and, shortly after, Mrs. Rich recounts, "I had the shock of my life. . . . A knock comes on the door and who walks in but my little friend Jack Ruby. . . . You could have knocked me over with a feather . . . and everybody looks like . . . here comes the Savior." Ruby was the CIA bag man—or paymaster—for the operation, and he left immediately after handing over a large sum in cash to the colonel. Mrs. Rich and her husband subsequently bowed out of the gun-smuggling deal, because, in her words, "I smelled an element that I did not want to have any part of." Afraid of retaliation, she and Perrin fled from Dallas and hid out in several different cities, winding up finally in New Orleans. A year later, he was found dead of arsenic poisoning. Though it would be difficult to pick a slower and more excruciating way to kill yourself, it was officially declared a suicide. There are too many other instances of Ruby's anti-Castro activity to go into here. Ruby appears to have been the CIA's bag man for a wide variety of anti-Castro adventures. In this connection, let me point out that one of the documents classified top secret in the Archives is a CIA file entitled "The Activities of Jack Ruby." Perhaps this will become a Book-of-the-Month Club selection in September 2038.

PLAYBOY: Even if Ruby was associated with certain Cuban exile groups, as you claim, couldn't all of this be totally unrelated to the assassination?

GARRISON: It could be, but it isn't. As a result of our investigation, I can say, with the same certitude that I can say the sun will rise in the east tomorrow morning, that Jack Ruby was involved in the conspiracy to kill John Kennedy. Much of the evidence we've uncovered about Ruby's involvement relates to our court case against Clay Shaw, so the canon of legal ethics prevents me from broadcasting it before trial. But I will give you one bit of evidence, recently uncovered by our office, that links Ruby to the conspiracy. Four days before the assassination, on November 18th, 1963, a young woman from Dallas named Rose Cheranic was thrown from a moving car on a highway outside Eunice, Louisiana. She was badly bruised and taken to the East Louisiana Hospital in Jackson, Louisi-

siana. When she came out of sedation, on November 19th, she was distraught and sobbed that she had been thrown out of the car by associates of a man named Jack Ruby in Dallas. She claimed to have been sent by Ruby from Dallas to Miami to pick up a shipment of narcotics. When asked by a hospital attendant—who fortunately took notes of her remarks, in case the police had to be called in—why she had been hurled from the car, she replied that narcotics smuggling was one thing, but she drew the line at murder. The President, she said, was going to be killed in Dallas within a few days. At this point, sadly enough, the hospital authorities seemed to dismiss her as hysterical and lost interest in her story, although she repeated it in detail the next day. After the assassination, of course, people in the hospital became interested once more, but she had already checked out, leaving no forwarding address other than Dallas, Texas. There the story stood until a few months ago, when we began searching for Miss Cheramic, but it was too late. After the assassination, she was killed by a hit-and-run driver on a highway outside Dallas.

PLAYBOY: If Jack Ruby was really the sinister and cunning figure you paint him, why would he kill Oswald in the Dallas city jail, where his own apprehension and conviction for murder were inevitable? Wasn't this more logically the act of a temporarily deranged man?

GARRISON: First of all, let me dispose of this concept of the "temporarily deranged man." This is a catchall term, employed whenever the real motive of a crime can't be nailed down. In the overwhelming majority of instances, the actions of human beings are the direct consequences of discernible motives. This is the fatal flaw of the Warren Report—its conclusion that the assassination of President Kennedy was the act of a temporarily deranged man, that the murder of Officer Tippit was equally meaningless and, finally, that Jack Ruby's murder of Oswald was another act of a temporarily deranged individual. It is, of course, wildly improbable that all three acts were coincidentally the aberrant acts of temporarily deranged men—although it's most convenient to view them as such, because that judgment obviates the necessity of relentlessly investigating the possibility of a conspiracy. In Jack Ruby's case, his murder of Lee Oswald was the sanest act he ever committed; if Oswald had lived another day or so, he very probably would have named names, and Jack Ruby would have been convicted as a conspirator in the assassination plot. As it was, Ruby made the best of a bad situation by rubbing out Oswald in the Dallas city jail, since this act could be construed as an argument that he was "temporarily deranged." But I differ with the assumption of your question, because, while there could have been

no doubt in Ruby's mind that he would be arrested, he could very well have entertained hopes of escaping conviction. You've got to remember the atmosphere in Dallas and across the country at that time: when word was flashed to the crowd outside the jail that Oswald had been shot, they burst into wild applause. Ruby's lawyer, Tom Howard, spoke for a sizable segment of public opinion when he said, "I think Ruby deserves a Congressional Medal," and the largest-circulation newspaper in the country, the *New York Daily News*, editorialized after Oswald's death that "the only good murderer is a dead murderer and the only good Communist a dead Communist." In the two days between his arrest and his liquidation, Oswald had been convicted by the mass media as the President's assassin and as a Communist, and Ruby may well have felt that he would be acquitted for murdering such a universally despised figure. It turned out, of course, that he was wrong, and he became a prisoner of the Dallas police,

forced over a year later to beg Earl Warren to take him back to Washington, because he wanted to tell the truth about "why my act was committed, but it can't be said here . . . my life is in danger here." But Ruby never got to Washington, and he's joined the long list of witnesses with vital information who have shuffled off this mortal coil.

PLAYBOY: Penn Jones, Norman Mailer and others have charged that Ruby was injected with live cancer cells in order to silence him. Do you agree?

GARRISON: I can't agree or disagree, since I have no evidence one way or the other. But we have discovered that David Ferrie had a rather curious hobby in addition to his study of cartridge trajectories: cancer research. He filled his apartment with white mice—at one point he had almost 2000, and neighbors complained—wrote a medical treatise on the subject and worked with a number of New Orleans doctors on means of inducing cancer in mice. After the assassination,



"Stone walls do not a prison make, but throw in armed guards and a general lack

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one of these physicians, Dr. Mary Sherman, was found hacked to death with a kitchen knife in her New Orleans apartment. Her murder is listed as unsolved. Ferrie's experiments may have been purely theoretical and Dr. Sherman's death completely unrelated to her association with Ferrie; but I do find it interesting that Jack Ruby died of cancer a few weeks after his conviction for murder had been overruled in appeals court and he was ordered to stand trial outside of Dallas—thus allowing him to speak freely if he so desired. I would also note that there was little hesitancy in killing Lee Harvey Oswald in order to prevent him from talking, so there is no reason to suspect that any more consideration would have been shown Jack Ruby if he had posed a threat to the architects of the conspiracy.

PLAYBOY: You've claimed that many of the people involved in the conspiracy were "neo-Nazi" in their political orientation. What would motivate Ruby, a Jew, to work with such people?

GARRISON: Money. As far as my office has been able to determine, Jack Ruby had no strong political views of his own. Historically, of course, there have been a number of self-hating Jews who abetted their own tormentors: Adolf Hitler's mentor in Vienna, Karl Lueger, was born a Jew, and I understand that one of the leading pro-Nazis in New York City, a retired millionaire who finances anti-Jewish activity across the country, is the son of a rabbi. But I don't believe Jack Ruby falls into this category; he was just a hoodlum out for a buck. I will say—with the understanding that it's pure speculation—it's not impossible that Jack Ruby developed certain guilt feelings in prison over his role in the plot. Remember his repeated lament, "Now there will be pogroms. They will kill all the Jews."?

Most people assumed this was just the fantasy of a crumbling mind. But maybe Jack Ruby knew better than the rest of us what the master-racist authors of the assassination had in mind for the country.

PLAYBOY: Let's move on from Jack Ruby to David Ferrie. Wesley Liebeler, the Warren Commission counsel who handled the New Orleans end of the inquiry, said Ferrie "was picked up shortly after the assassination and questioned by local officials of the FBI. I remember specifically doing up a substantial stack of FBI reports on Ferrie that we reviewed in order to make our determination." He states that the FBI reports on Ferrie were not included in the Commission's 26 volumes of evidence, "because it was so clear he wasn't involved." Why do you refuse to accept this explanation?

GARRISON: I think it's a lovely explanation. Now perhaps Mr. Liebeler will intercede with the Department of Justice to release 25 pages of the FBI report on Ferrie that have been classified as

in the Archives. Then we'll all have a chance to see for ourselves how clear it is that Ferrie wasn't involved. Every scrap of evidence we've uncovered—and it hasn't been difficult to find—reveals not only the fact of his involvement but the reasons for it. His politics were ultra-right wing, as I indicated earlier, but we've been able to determine conclusively that his motivation was closer to that of the Cuban exiles on the "operative" level—a burning hatred of Fidel Castro. When Castro was a guerrilla in the Sierra Maestra, Ferrie is reliably reported to have piloted guns for him. But in 1959, when Castro started to show his Marxist colors, Ferrie appears to have felt betrayed and reacted against Castro with all the bitterness of a suitor jilted by his girl. From that moment on, he dedicated himself to Castro's overthrow and began working with exile groups such as the Cuban Democratic Revolutionary Front and planning airborne missions against Castro's military installations. He was reported to have been paid up to \$1500 a mission by an ex-Batista official named Eladio del Valle. But I haven't been able to check out Del Valle's involvement with Ferrie, because on February 22, 1967, the same day Ferrie died in New Orleans, Del Valle's head was split open by a hatchet and he was shot through the heart in Miami. His murder is listed as unsolved by the Miami police. In any case, Ferrie was recruited by the CIA, which employed hundreds of such people in their network of anti-Castro exile activities. From the Bay of Pigs on, he hated Kennedy as much as he did Castro; he felt that J. F. K. had betrayed the invasion brigade by not sending in air cover. As the events I described earlier led to a *détente* between Russia and America, and as the FBI—under Kennedy's orders—started cracking down on the CIA-supported anti-Castro underground, Ferrie's hatred for Kennedy grew more and more obsessive. Let me add here that this isn't just speculation on my part; we have a number of reliable witnesses who were privy to Ferrie's thoughts at this period and saw his hatred of Kennedy develop into a driving force. After the assassination, as a matter of fact, something psychologically curious happened to Ferrie: He dropped out of anti-Castro exile activities, left the pay of the CIA and drifted aimlessly while his emotional problems increased to the point where he was totally dependent on huge doses of tranquilizers and barbiturates. I don't know if Ferrie ever experienced any guilt about the assassination itself; but in his last months, he was a tortured man.

PLAYBOY: After Ferrie's death, you called it "an apparent suicide," but the coroner announced that the autopsy showed death was due to a ruptured blood vessel at the

hemorrhage. Have you subsequently resolved the discrepancy in your points of view?

GARRISON: Dr. Nicholas Chetta is an excellent coroner, and inasmuch as he found a total absence of traceable poisons or barbiturates in Ferrie's system, I would respect his opinion that it was a natural death. On the other hand, I can't help but lend a certain weight to two suicide notes Ferrie left in his apartment, one of which said how sweet it was to finally leave this wretched life. I suppose it could just be a weird coincidence that the night Ferrie penned two suicide notes, he died of natural causes.

PLAYBOY: Your critics have charged that your relentless investigation of Ferrie and the publicity the press gave to your charges against him induced the state of hypertension that was said to have caused his fatal hemorrhage. Do you feel in any way responsible for Ferrie's death?

GARRISON: I had nothing but pity for Dave Ferrie while he was alive, and I have nothing but pity for him now that he's dead. Ferrie was a pathetic and tortured creature, a genuinely brilliant man whose twisted drives locked him into his own private hell. If I had been able to help Ferrie, I would have; but he was in too deep and he was terrified. From the moment he realized we had looked behind the façade and established that Lee Oswald was anything but a Communist, from the moment he knew we had discovered the role of the CIA and anti-Castro adventurers in the assassination, Ferrie began to crumble psychologically. So, to answer your question directly—yes, I suppose I may have been responsible for Ferrie's death. If I had left this case alone, if I had allowed Kennedy's murderers to continue to walk the streets of America unimpeded, Dave Ferrie would probably be alive today. I don't feel personally guilty about Ferrie's death, but I do feel terribly sorry for the waste of another human being. In a deeper sense, though, Dave Ferrie died on November 22, 1963. From that moment on, he couldn't save himself, and I couldn't save him. Ferrie could have quoted as his epitaph the last words of the Serb partisan leader Draja Mihailovitch before Tito shot him for collaboration: "I was swept up in the gales of history."

PLAYBOY: Many of the professional critics of the Warren Commission appear to be prompted by political motives: Those on the left are anxious to prove Kennedy was murdered by a conspiracy within the establishment; and those on the right are eager to prove the assassination was an act of "the international Communist conspiracy." Where would you place yourself on the political spectrum—right, left or center?

GARRISON: That's a question I've asked

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myself frequently, especially since this investigation started and I found myself in an incongruous and disillusioning battle with agencies of my own Government. I can't just sit down and add up my political beliefs like a mathematical sum, but I think, in balance, I'd turn up somewhere around the middle. Over the years, I guess I've developed a somewhat conservative attitude—in the traditional libertarian sense of conservatism, as opposed to the thumbscrew-and-rack conservatism of the paramilitary right—particularly in regard to the importance of the individual as opposed to the state and the individual's own responsibilities to humanity. I don't think I've ever tried to formulate this into a coherent political philosophy, but at the root of my concern is the conviction that a human being is *not* a digit; he's not a digit in regard to the state and he's not a digit in the sense that he can ignore his fellow men and his obligations to society. I was with the artillery supporting the division that took Dachau; I arrived there the day after it was taken, when bulldozers were making pyramids of human bodies outside the camp. What I saw there has haunted me ever since. Because the law

is my profession, I've always wondered about the judges throughout Germany who sentenced men to jail for picking pockets at a time when their own government was jerking gold from the teeth of men murdered in gas chambers. I'm concerned about all of this because it isn't a German phenomenon; it's a human phenomenon. It *can* happen here, because there has been no change and there has been no progress and there has been no increase of understanding on the part of men for their fellow man. What worries me deeply, and I have seen it exemplified in this case, is that we in America are in great danger of slowly evolving into a proto-fascist state. It will be a different kind of fascist state from the one the Germans evolved; theirs grew out of depression and promised bread and work, while ours, curiously enough, seems to be emerging from prosperity. But in the final analysis, it's based on power and on the inability to put human goals and human conscience above the dictates of the state. Its origins can be traced in the tremendous war machine we've built since 1945, the "military-industrial complex" that Eisenhower vainly warned us about, which

now dominates every aspect of our life. The power of the states and Congress has gradually been abandoned to the Executive Department, because of war conditions; and we've seen the creation of an arrogant, swollen bureaucratic complex totally unfettered by the checks and balances of the Constitution. In a very real and terrifying sense, our Government is the CIA and the Pentagon, with Congress reduced to a debating society. Of course, you can't spot this trend to fascism by casually looking around. You can't look for such familiar signs as the swastika, because they won't be there. We won't build Dachaus and Auschwitzes; the clever manipulation of the mass media is creating a concentration camp of the mind that promises to be far more effective in keeping the populace in line. We're not going to wake up one morning and suddenly find ourselves in gray uniforms goose-stepping off to work. But this isn't the test. The test is: What happens to the individual who *dissents*? In Nazi Germany, he was physically destroyed; here, the process is more subtle, but the end results can be the same. I've learned enough about the machinations of the CIA in the past year to know that this is no longer the dreamworld America I once believed in. The imperatives of the population explosion, which almost inevitably will lessen our belief in the sanctity of the individual human life, combined with the awesome power of the CIA and the defense establishment, seem destined to seal the fate of the America I knew as a child and bring us into a new Orwellian world where the citizen exists for the state and where raw power justifies any and every immoral act. I've always had a kind of knee-jerk trust in my Government's basic integrity, whatever political blunders it may make. But I've come to realize that in Washington, deceiving and manipulating the public are viewed by some as the natural prerogatives of office. Huey Long once said, "Fascism will come to America in the name of anti-fascism." I'm afraid, based on my own experience, that fascism will come to America in the name of national security.

PLAYBOY: Considering all the criticism that has come your way, would you still launch your investigation into the assassination if you had it to do over again?
GARRISON: As long as the men who shot John Kennedy to death in Dallas are walking the streets of America, I will continue this investigation. I have no regrets about initiating it and I have no regrets about carrying it on to its conclusion. If it takes me 30 years to nail every one of the assassins, then I will continue this investigation for 30 years. I owe that not only to Jack Kennedy but to my country.

